OCTOBER 1977

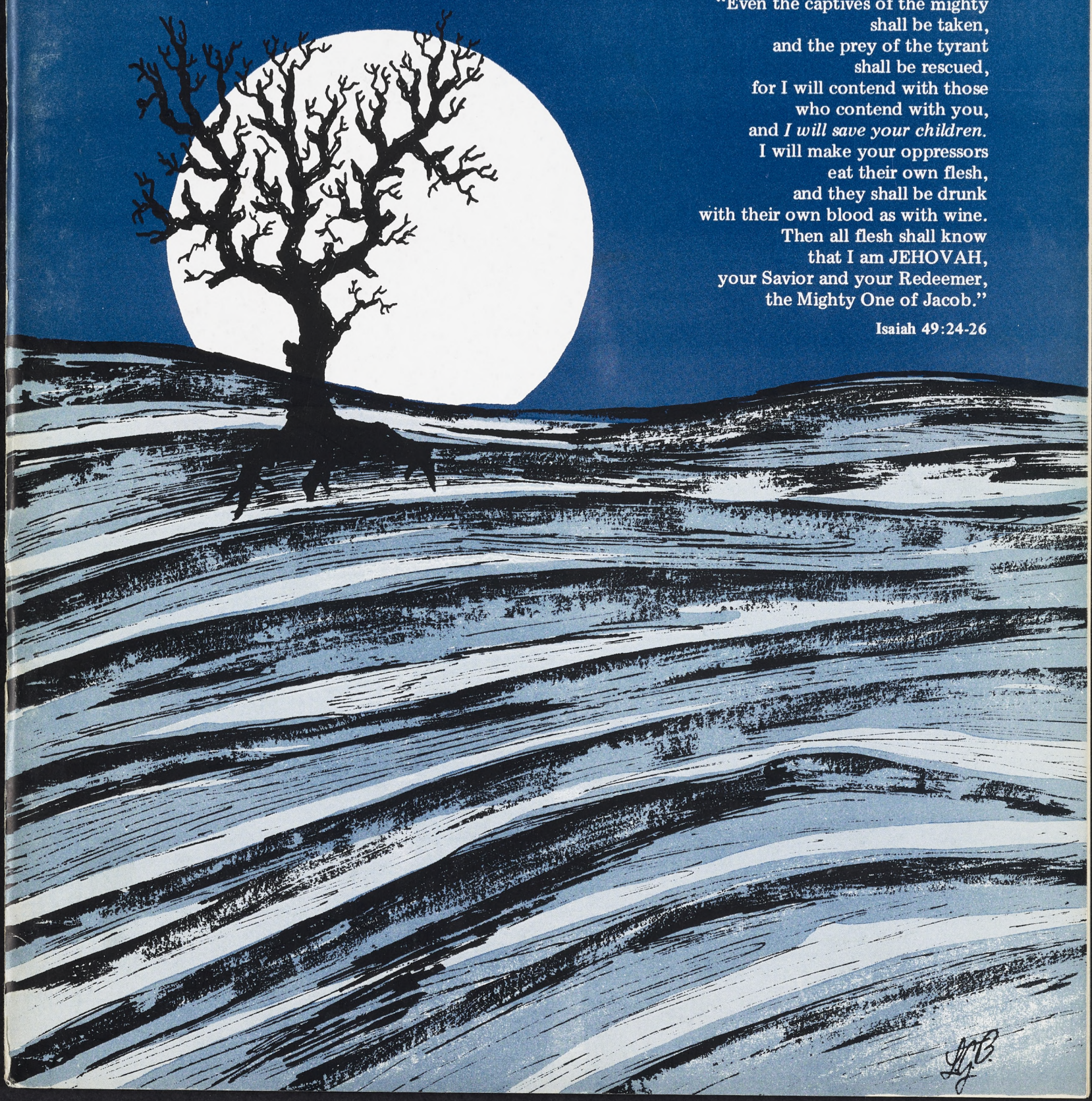
IN UNITY

$ 1.25 DONATION

Can the prey be taken
from the mighty?
Can the captives be rescued
from the tyrant?
Yes! Thus says the Lord!

"Even the captives of the mighty
shall be taken,
and the prey of the tyrant
shall be rescued,
for I will contend with those
who contend with you,
and *I will save your children.*
I will make your oppressors
eat their own flesh,
and they shall be drunk
with their own blood as with wine.
Then all flesh shall know
that I am JEHOVAH,
your Savior and your Redeemer,
the Mighty One of Jacob."

Isaiah 49:24-26



THE FAST

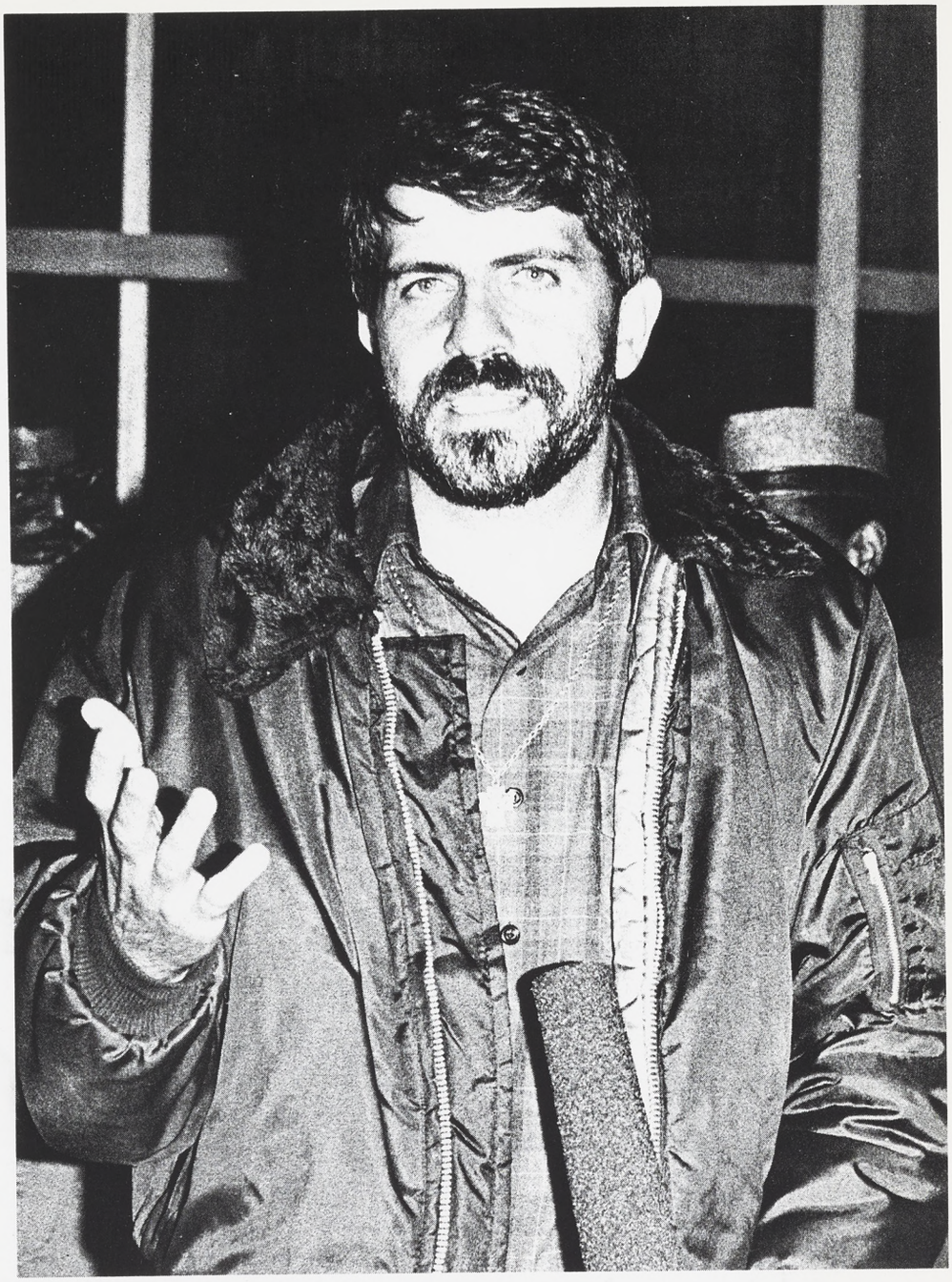


Photo by Glori Waco

From September 6 to September 21, The Rev. Troy Perry fasted on water. This was a public fast, carried out on the front portico of the Federal Building in downtown Los Angeles.

The purpose of the fast was twofold: 1) to call public attention to the injustice of a move by California State Senator John Briggs that would result in discrimination against the employment of homosexual school teachers; and 2) to call attention to the urgent need for funds to fight this violation of basic human rights.

Fasting is mentioned numerous times in the Old Testament and it is recorded in the New Testament that Jesus Himself prepared for His ministry by a 40 day fast.

In the Scriptures, fasting often accompanies prayer in crises or times of great needs. Public fasts were sometimes proclaimed as part of public petitions. (Cf. Judges 20:26; I Sam 14:24, I Kings 21:9; Esra 8:21-23; Jeremiah 14:12, 36:6, 36:9; Jonah 3:5 ff.)

In modern times, fasting has been employed to achieve social justice ends. In the 30's Mohatma Ghandi pledged a "fast to the death" in behalf of the human rights of India's "Untouchables." That fast lasted 31 days. Rev. Perry fasted for ten days in 1970 for gay employment rights. Brian McNaught, columnist for a Catholic newspaper in Detroit, fasted for 24 days in 1974 to obtain dialog on gay rights with Catholic church authorities after he was discovered to be gay and fired from his job.

Routine fasting is not uncommon for Rev. Perry. His staff members are never surprised when he periodically turns down a luncheon invitation because he is fasting during a period of prayer for some particular need or crisis.

Rev. Perry began a "routine" fast on September 6 while he was praying about the alarming implications of State Senator Briggs' effort to get the citizens of California to outlaw homosexual school teachers in California. "To what lengths would they go," he wondered, "to find out what was going on in the bedrooms of teachers? And if this terrible law

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The Rev. Richard R. Mickley is ordained to the lifelong professional ministry of the Fellowship by the Laying on of Hands of the Board of Elders at General Conference VIII in Denver, Colorado. *Photo by Peter, photographer*

INSIDE IN UNITY

Editorial comment by Richard R. Mickley

We will long remember the Dade County slogan: "Kill a Queer for Christ," and its counterparts: "Bury a Fairy," and "Do the World a Favor; Shoot a Faggot."

I was driving on the Long Beach Freeway the other day just a few miles from Los Angeles — returning from a funeral as a matter of fact — when I saw another one, which would indeed put God's stamp on the whole business: "Drought! God says: There's something QUEER going on around here." That gigantic billboard blamed the California water shortage on God's disapproval of gay people (apparently). Seems like it had been there a few months and I wondered, now that the drought is dampening, if the divine outlook has changed?

In the name of religion, Anita Bryant unleashed a torrent of hatred and bigotry. It has spread from citrus groves of Florida to the Senate chambers of California. There a freshman state senator, ambitious for the governor's mansion (a mansion, incidentally, spurned by the present pro-human rights Governor), is attempting to win state-wide recognition by clinging to Bryant's skirt tails (after returning from assisting her in the citrus sweet victory in Miami). His method is trying to push through hate legislation that would require the firing of homosexual school teachers and would be the occasion for God-only-knows what kind of witch hunts and invasions of privacy to "detect and catch them" before and after employment. His fellow senators rejected a move to accomplish this in the legislature. He then began collecting signatures for a state-wide referendum.

We all know what Rev. Perry was led to do in the face of this blatant attack upon human rights. Rev. Perry was led to take a bold and courageous stand in behalf of the people God has called him to lead out of oppression into the light of the Gospel. Rev. Perry's 16 day fast on the portico of the Federal Building in downtown Los Angeles in behalf of human rights for gay epople is, in my opinion, a very Christian work, and very theologically sound (if an apologia is necessary).

I like very much what *Advocate* owner and publisher, David Goodstein, wrote about Troy's fast. He said some things far more eloquently than I am able to do. For those who missed it in the *Advocate*, his column is reprinted in this issue of IN UNITY.

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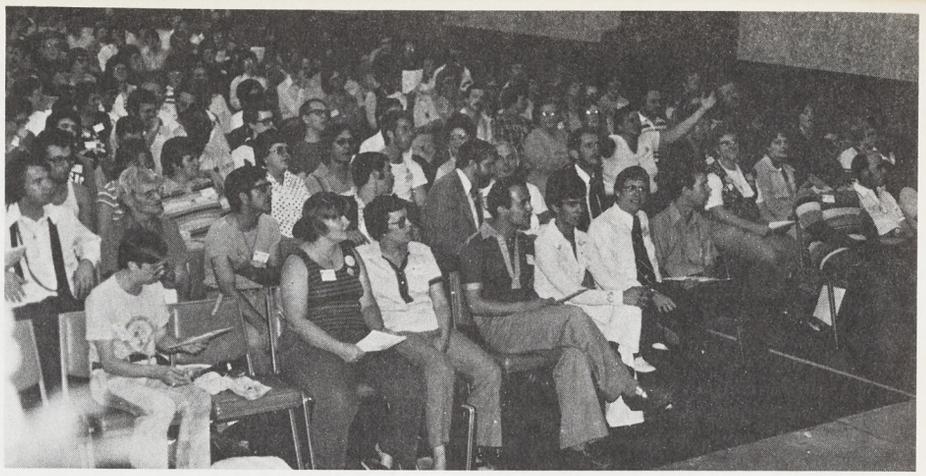

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NOTICE

It has been suggested that *The Gay Christian* be made a separate magazine again, with separate subscriptions and a separate mailing. We would like to hear from our readers.

It has been suggested that IN UNITY be discontinued. We would like to hear from our readers.

Certainly, as any other legislators, the Elders would be interested in hearing from "the people." The readers and subscribers are "the people." Your expression of concern, non-concern, interest, non-interest should be a great help in knowing what decisions should be made. A letter to the editor will show your interest. No letter will show "no interest."

MCC Phoenix has been firebombed! Word came to us just as we were ready to go to press that the social hall, kitchen, and church offices of MCC Phoenix have been completely demolished. Smoke and water damage in the adjoining sanctuary were described as extensive. The Phoenix Fire Department traced the cause of the middle-of-the-night conflagration as "definitely a fire bomb." It is believed that insurance will cover a portion of $15,000 damage to the desert-land church in downtown Phoenix alongside the Maricopa freeway. More details next issue.

We are asking all MCC's who have experienced any extensive damage or harrassment (ever) to send the information to IN UNITY for a comprehensive inclusive story in the next issue.

OVERVIEW

GENERAL CONFERENCE VIII

by The Rev. Tom Taylor

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS.

In September 1970, representatives from eight churches met in Los Angeles. A ninth, unable to send a representative, waited to hear the results.

Nothing remarkable about that; churches hold conferences every year. Yet there was a difference — These churches had been organized by gay Christians to bring God's message of salvation to ALL people regardless of race, social standing, sex or sexual preference.

It was exhilarating for many to hear, for the first time, that "God loves the homosexual." For many it was the first time they had met "in the open" with other gay people.

In spite of the love, there was still fear. Fear of what the "outside" world could do to a "gay" church; fear of each other — afraid of what could happen if you really opened up; and fear of all of the various religious backgrounds that were represented.

There was also a unique blending of the spiritual and secular; a blending that some felt was bizzare and would not last.

In August, eight years later, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, met in Denver, Colorado. This time over 100 churches from throughout the world were represented. The same message: "God loves the homosexual" was preached, but this time there was a difference.

Most of the fear and the mistrust was gone. The message of God's love had been tested and the vision, which had ignited the spirit of Rev. Troy Perry and those early believers, blazed even brighter. A movement, which had originally been seen as a brief haven for the oppressed, had developed into a growing denomination. The message of God's love, so apparent to those within UFMCC, was not so apparent to mainline churches. They "hardened their hearts," held on to old traditions like the Pharisees of old and closed their hearts to God's continued revelation.

The unique blend of the spiritual and the secular was still there, but the sharp edges of contrast had been softened. As gay men and women wrestled with God's message, their lives had changed. God's Spirit had found fertile ground.

Moral questions, which had been avoided for fear they would drive people away, were now part of the fabric being woven. The new fabric did not condemn but gave men and women the freedom to come to grips with these issues in their own way and in their own time. People were now more willing to trust in the Spirit, letting God bring about the change, rather than demanding it as a prerequisite to hear God.

Church business in Denver was dispatched without the major hassles that marked previous conferences, in spite of some difficult problems.

Membership was granted to missions and study groups; the General Conference was changed from annual to biennial; lay representation was added to the district board of home missions and a $215,350 budget for 1977-78 and $283,050 for 1978-79 were approved.

Thousands of MCC members and friends gather in the Grand Ballroom of the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Denver, Colorado, for the services of worship held during conference. This photo was taken at the Saturday evening service at which the Graduation Ceremony for Samaritan Theological Institute and the Rite of Ordination were held. *Photo by Peter, photographer*

Efforts to open the membership to non-Christians were defeated. The action was seen not as a condemnation of our non-Christian brothers and sisters but a clear statement that Jesus Christ was and is the foundation of the Fellowship. This was again borne out when efforts to separate the articles of Faith from the By-laws failed.

No longer was the message just about God's love for the homosexual, but now the message outlined our responsibility to God.

Rev. Joseph Gilbert of Miami warned of the responsibility that comes with accepting God's love. "Being called to holiness of living does not mean let the pastor do it *for* us," he said.

Too often, he continued, a congregation "uses" a pastor to avoid its own responsibility within God's kingdom.

All of the speakers emphasized it was not enough for God to love us; we in turn had to respond to that love; to sacrifice; to let go of what we are to be what God would have us be.

"God, at one time in history decided to give us a new deal," Rev. Ted McIlevenna, United Methodist Church, San Francisco, told the delegates, pointing out that God picked a very "unlikely person" to bring the new deal to our attention.

The new deal, according to McIlevenna, shows us that God is already here; that we have to be conscious of our salvation; we have to say "yes."

We specifically find God by seeking, asking, looking; being in an attitude of searching; being open to God's message. We also find God by serving, giving.

McIlevenna warned that we should never take away a person's right to give "in other people, in ourselves and in sex."

"Have the courage to be the special person God created you to be," Rev. James Glyer of Kansas City stressed. "Recognize and rejoice in what God created us to be and get on with becoming what we are."

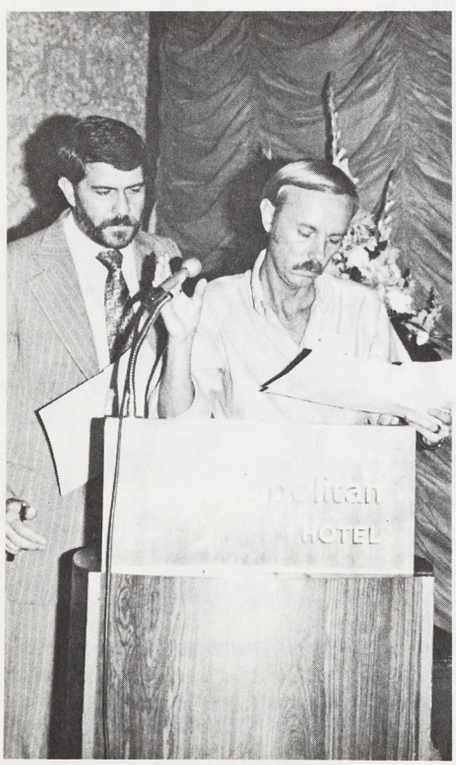
Risk is part of life, he stressed. "We should have the courage to be in spite of failure. It's a part of life."

"Can you fail and not be a failure?" he asked, noting Edison, commenting on his many non-productive experiments, observed he had not failed but had just discovered many ways that didn't work.

Forgiveness is God's plan to free us from past burdens to enable us to be the persons we are supposed to be, Glyer continued. "You and I must know we have an unexhaustable source of freedom."

"The joy of my faith is knowing that God created me and said, 'I was good' and that God will stand by me if only I have the courage to be."

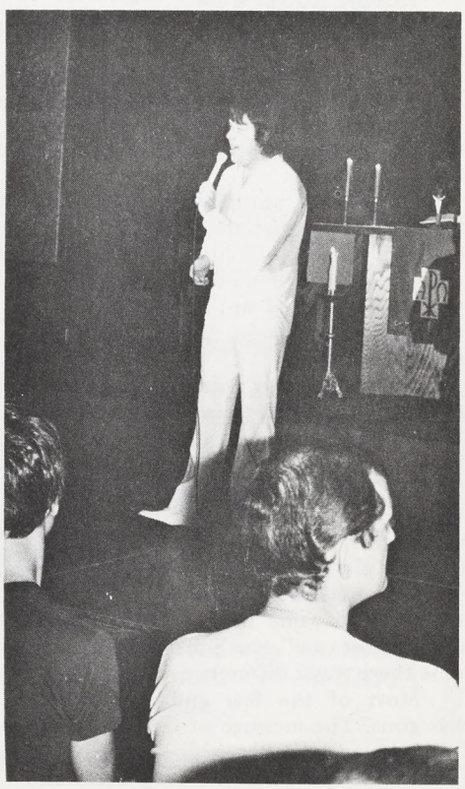
The Rev. Elder Freda Smith of Sacramento MCC, warned that being a Christian was an awesome, fighting, responsibility; that we were not chosen because we are the best or that we are



Brother Herm Mank (San Francisco, California) presides over the By-Laws revision session of General Conference. A number of significant changes were passed this year by the lay and clergy delegates [see text].

The Rev. Susan Savell, a minister in the United Church of Christ and guest speaker at conference, charmed the assembly when she sang two songs of her own composition as part of her presentation.

It isn't "conference" without the Rev. Willie Smith! Willie, who has shared in every conference of the church to date, led the Sunday evening song service and sang two moving sacred solo selections as his gift to this year's music program.



more spiritual or that we are more right. "We are chosen for God's own reason," she added, noting that God often chose the weak, the foolish and the despised to deal with the world.

The long list of daily announcements, at least during the first three days, were marked with a plea by Rev. Troy Perry for the delegates to observe propriety. "The men will have to stop using the powder room," he pleaded time after time. It later developed that the hotel staff was misreading the facts and taking two of our women ministers as men.

Once this was determined, the Elders must have all sighed with relief, until Wednesday, when the Rotary Club met in the main conference hall. The hotel, not bothering to tell anyone, converted the notorious powder room into the men's room for the day. Many of our women delegates, seeing the hand-scribbled sign tacked on the door, thought it was a joke. There was a bit of confusion for a time.

The conference hall filled to capacity during services Saturday and Sunday. Overflow crowds watched via closed-circuit television in an upstairs banquet hall.

The Fellowship's third hymn was introduced. In 1974 it was "I'm Not Afraid Anymore." Last year it was "God Is Like An Eagle." This year we had "The Voice of a Prophet is Sounding Again."

The prophet was Troy Perry who saw God's vision and heeded God's word and the prophet was UFMCC which grew in response to God's vision and the prophet is you and I when we speak out against injustice; when we proclaim God's freedom to be what we were created to be.

The business sessions, in addition to hearing reports from Boards, Commissions, and Task Forces, made major Conference decisions:

1. Removal of the Athenasian Creed as an article of faith of the UFMCC due to sexist language and repetition of doctrines found already in other Creeds.

2. Approval for Study Groups and Missions to have individual members. Prior to now, only Chartered Churches could have official members. Missions will also now have one voting delegate to all UFMCC Conferences. This change raises the total official membership of the UFMCC to nearly 25,000.

3. Removal of the ordination of Deacons as a rite of the Church. Local churches may continue to use a "laying on of hands" to set apart Deacons in their own congregations. Ordination per se will henceforth be reserved for Clergy.

4. Approval of UFMCC General Conferences meeting only every other year instead of annually. The next General Conference will be the tenth-anniversary Conference at MCC/LA in 1979. It was agreed that travel costs were now too expensive for annual Conferences, especially for churches outside the continental USA.

(ABOVE) The Rev. Karen Lindstrom presents "gold panning dishes" to the Elders on behalf of the Denver, Colorado, congregation — host church for the conference — which is located in the heart of Rocky Mountain "gold country". (BELOW) Business as usual: Elders Hose and Cureton and Frank Zerilli handle the multitude of small details which are necessary for a smooth conference.

The Rev. Jo Ann Monti (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) and Charlie Butler (Washington, D.C.) shared together in singing a duet at conference for the second year in a row; both of them sang at General Conference in Washington, D.C. in 1976

Photos by the Rev. Tom Taylor

"REJOICE

The Rev. Elder Charlie Arehart
Pastor, MCC Denver, Colorado

The Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson
Pastor, MCC Detroit, Michigan

The Rev. Stan Roberts
Pastor. MCC San Jose, California

Photos by the Rev. Tom Taylor

by Jane Carl

Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, Rejoice! Let all people know your forebearance. The Lord is at hand . . . Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise . . . Think on these things . . ."

(The last four words of this verse from Phil 4:8 was the theme of the 8th General Conference and the theme of the twice a day sermons at the Conference worship services. In this article Jane Carl tries to capture something of the verve that flowed through these inspiring sermons. —ed.)

I have never been to a General Conference before that gave me as much to think about as this Conference did. I sometimes wondered if the ministers that were preaching had some special insight into my own personal life and into that of my church. Upon talking to others around Denver, I found that many people had this same train of thought. What then could it be that caused every minister that preached to hit us all so forcefully, in our weakest places? I tend to believe that perhaps the Holy Spirit had something to do with that.

It was certainly obvious that the Holy Spirit did not just arrive in Denver on August 1st to attend General Conference. It was apparent that the Holy Spirit resided in Denver long before any of us arrived, and that this same Holy Spirit directed our Elders as they developed the plans for this Conference. I know, too, that the Holy Spirit also must have been residing in the hearts and lives of MCC members all over the world. All of this magnificence, brought together in Denver, all at the same time, made this Eighth General Conference one of, if not the, most powerful conference that the UFMCC has ever experienced.

In the past we've been taught Salvation, Liberation, Proclamation, and Celebration. This year we were taught "Administration." Webster defines administration in this way: "To control and direct; to conduct; to guide; to treat with care; to direct affairs; to achieve one's purpose."

Reverend Elder Charlie Arehart started it out at 9:00 Monday morning with "You are what you think." He told us about "destructive thinkers" and how like attracts like within our churches. He taught us that if we start out the day with a smile and a good thought that, chances are, we will have a good and successful day.

For the next two days we were blessed by Reverend Austin Amerine, Reverend Joseph Gilbert and Reverend Jim Glyer as they followed by asking us "Who's name is at stake?" We were told that you "Cannot make someone else responsible for your sense of worth;" "You leave this life with exactly what you come in with — Yourself." And during that lifetime you must take some risks. We learned about the nourishment and care of ministers, what is to be expected of congregations and how the two should relate to each other.

All this wasn't enough for us to chew on . . . Wednesday morning brought us Reverend Elder Nancy Wilson, followed by Reverend Stan Harris, Reverend Elder Carol Cureton and Reverend Jan Weymouth. The Holy Spirit evidently felt that it had sufficiently psychoanalyzed us and had placed us all in our proper perspective and so we then listened to God calling us to service in the race for souls and learned some lessons on how to nurture souls. God began to open us up to how important it is in allowing God to lead our lives. How we must be "Instant in season and out of season." We were led by personal testimony through a life of service and entry into the ministry and we were allowed to see how difficult times and hard knocks are, in fact, blessings that lead us to a more perfect place and union with our Lord.

We were blessed as Reverend Harris so vividly walked us through each phase of a "high" liturgical service. Processing, fully robed, with incense burning and recessing, fully robed, beating on a tamborine and singing gospel music.

We came to a better realization that this mighty God that we serve is present in all types of services, reigning through that precious Holy Spirit. Another lesson learned that we shall never forget.

Wondering how much more our minds could handle, we heard from Reverend Stan Roberts and Reverend Elder Freda Smith. Our minds were stirred by thoughts on Longsuffering. Something I shall long remember is Reverend Smith's story of the Christian

ALWAYS"

who said "I'm O.K., under the circumstances" and her answer to that was "What is a Christian doing under there."

Saturday morning brought us an exercise in mind expansion as we heard from our sister Susan Savell, chairperson of the United Church of Christ Board of Homeland Ministries, as she so ably presented God to us as a complete, all encompassing, Mother and Father. Her feminine God was difficult for many to understand, but a beautiful, well constructed lesson was given and was accepted as food for thought, as fact, as God-centered.

By Saturday night we were saturated and blessed as Reverend Elder John Hose preached. Prior to his message we witnessed the Ordination to life-long service of six of our ministers. This was an unexplainable, stirring experience. As the yolk was placed about each minister's neck you could feel the weight of the task that they had been called to perform. I pray that our Lord will distribute, to each one, strength, as needed, so theymay say with Paul "For I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content." They have not been chosen for an easy life, but certainly it can be a fulfilling life.

We were delighted to be able to share in the graduation exercise with the students from Samaritan Theological Institute. It's encouraging to know that our own educational system is so splendidly organized and that our ministers, and future ministers, are able to obtain proper education within the realm of the UFMCC. What a blessing we received hearing these graduates' testimonies, combined with the beautiful "Allelujah" presented by the San Diego choir. The aura of our Lord was radiant throughout the entire service.

One of the most thrilling moments of every General Conference, and probably the most anticipated service of every General Conference, is that special moment when our Founder and Moderator, Reverend Elder Troy Perry, approaches the microphone on Sunday and in a way, unduplicated by anyone else, demands a response by "If you love the Lord, say Amen!" At which time the walls tremble as the congregation exuberantly responds with a mighty "AMEN!" We then know as he breaks the bread of life to us that he will tell us of the things that have happened through his travels during the year. He will tell us too, of the things that could have happened. This year was better than ever before. He made us laugh, he made us cry, he made us angry (at bigotry, at our own failures), he encouraged us to be free, to be Christian, to be saved. We know that what he says to us is true and we are ready now to turn our fears and hatreds over to God. We then walked to Communion, knowing that Jesus Christ loves us because we are created by and for God. We left the service not hating anymore Anita Bryant or Pat Boone or the many others that would try to crucify minority peoples, but instead we learned that Christ is the answer, not only to our problems and fears, but also to the problems and fears that bigots have that cause them to do the strange things that they do.

The climactic ending of the VIII General Conference was a sermon by Reverend Elder Jim Sandmire which pulled together everything we had learned all week. He drew a line between liberals and conservatives and began talking to us regarding what sin is all about. We must have a new vision and re-examine the old. He taught us that sin is "separation from God" and that can be something different for each one of us. The mighty culmination occurred when an invitation was given for us to kneel at the altar, before God and all those present, decide what it was that separated us from God and then ask forgiveness of those sins. Many people responded to that altar call and left those sins with their Lord as they prayed. Praise God for true liberation.

Lives were changed at Conference this year. No one could possibly have left Denver the same person as they were upon arrival. People came with distrust for the Fellowship and left with understanding and a new respect. Congregational members came with dissatisfaction with their Pastor and left with the capacity to judge rationally. Ministers came feeling exhausted, overpowered, unloved and went away refreshed, with a new vision and ready to pick up their cross and follow Jesus.

God, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit, the 3 in 1, moved in the fight against sin, in an effort to teach us how to administer our lives, and as a result our lives are very different.

We will long remember 1977 in Denver, Colorado when the people of MCC from all over the world were fed the finest of meat . . . fed as adults, no longer babes.

The Rev. Jan Weymouth
Australasia District Coordinator

The Rev. Jim Glyer
Pastor, MCC Kansas City, Missouri

The Rev. Susan Savell
UCC Board of Homeland Ministries
Liberation Church Development Staff

MCC, I FIRST SAW YOU

By Brian McNaught

I first saw you from a distance. It had to be that way for it was the only way I felt safe enough to stare. My, I thought you were odd.

Coming from a strong Roman Catholic background through which I participated in frequent prayers for all of our "separated brothers and sisters," I must admit that when you first arrived on the scene I was pretty skeptical. A new Christian Church with a principle ministry to homosexuals, you said. A "Gay Church" I responded. I heard that many of your members were former Roman Catholics and that many of your ministers were former religious. My skepticism increased. "Why don't they stick it out," I wondered, "things will improve in Rome."

"I FIRST SAW YOU FROM A DISTANCE. IT HAD TO BE THAT WAY FOR IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I FELT SAFE ENOUGH TO STARE. MY, I THOUGHT YOU WERE ODD."

Then I attended one of your services. I saw some familiar practices of worship but what were all of those "Amens" and "Alleluias" which interrupted the sermon? What were those funny-colored clergy shirts and why are they wearing them? Are they frustrated priests? Is this really a Christian gathering? Do these people have anything to do with the others I have heard of who claim to be bishops and yet are victimizing the "lost souls"?

I maintained a polite distance and continued to watch and gather as much information about you as I could. Sometimes I discovered weaknesses; you know, "problems," and I thought that while you had some good points your faults would prevent you from being taken too seriously by anyone.

But you grew and your growth amazed me. What is their attraction, I wondered? Surely these people would be better off in the gay caucuses of their own denominations. But instead of folding you grew more stable. How is this so, I querried, when they are reaching out to so many hurting and demanding people and how are they able to deal with the cultural backgrounds of the Methodists,

FROM A DISTANCE

Romans, Episcopalians, Evangelicals, Baptists, Presbyterians, United Church of Christ, Unitarians, and the Salvation Army, to name only a few? It is a Tower of Babel. But rather than be overcome by the many voices which dominated your early years, you created a new language which most everyone could speak.

Still unconvinced, I continued to probe various aspects of your personality as I encountered them in my travels. No one with real talent would risk their reputation with such a new and highly-suspect enterprise, I reasoned, so what I must do is discover their flaw. Their political activists must have been rejected by someone else. Their leaders must have ego problems. They all must be coming from deeply disturbed childhoods, weak faith and uncommitted parents. Cleverly I probed you and watched and listened for your response.

Well, thought I, *they* must be the lucky exception. How fortunate they are to have suckered in the professional services of these individuals. But other new organizations attract inquisitive professionals, so let us put them through the final test, the test by fire. They claim to be a Christian Church. Just how Christian are they? Despite the weaknesses of my own Church in this area, the guiding light must be: Do they love selflessly and are they committed to justice?

"THE LOBBY OF THE COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL WAS TO BE MY HOME FOR THE NEXT THREE DAYS . . . THE OVER-STUFFED COUCHES WERE MY NEST OF OBSERVATION . . . FROM WHICH I COULD WATCH YOU INDIVIDUALLY . . ."

I arrived at your conference in Denver fully drained by the events of the previous few months, with the added dimension of being bombarded with a variety of stimuli. The night before I attended both the Dignity and Integrity Liturgies. Father Tom Oddo celebrated the first; Father Ron Wesner the second. Prior to that I was in the company of the largest collection to date of gay leaders in the country; individuals who have committed themselves to a variety of tasks in guaranteeing justice for the gay community.

The lobby of the Cosmopolitan Hotel was to be my home for the next three days. While your schedules were heavy with meetings, and while many of you only rested in the blue over-stuffed couches during your breaks, they were my nest of observation. I claimed each one as my haven from the emotional storm and as my perch from which I could watch you individually. Others wore name badges explaining who they were and from whence they came. I cleverly disguised myself with a tag reading "YES, I am having a good time; NO, I wasn't invited."

"I TOLD YOU THEN THAT I SAW YOU AS A PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT. DID YOU HEAR ME? THE LOVE YOU SHOW ONE ANOTHER; THE MINISTRY THAT YOU OFFER TO SO MANY BEYOND YOURSELVES; THE STRENGTH YOU DISPLAY IN DEALING WITH DIFFICULT SOCIAL ISSUES."

Although I had met many of the personalities of the UFMCC in the last four years, the people who make the Church what it is, the people who join the Church as an affirmation of its Christian community drawing power, were basically unknown to me. However, I did know some of the faces from Detroit, given the time I spent there, so it was these individuals I watched most closely.

And what did I see? Something extraordinary . . . Smiles. Perhaps from your perspective a smile isn't saying much of anything. Anyone can smile. A fool can smile perpetually. But from my experience in Christian churches and from my intense experiences with gay persons, not everyone does smile. And who more than Christians have something to smile about, I thought. A smile in a world which is overflowing with brutality, isolationism, hunger and injustice is either a sign of senility or hope. I saw hope, Christian hope, in the smiles on the faces of the twenty or so Detroit persons who sat together in the Cosmopolitan Hotel.

I knew it was a smile of hope because it was accompanied by other important signs. Their eyes sang of contentment. Eyes, you see, are an essential life sign. If an individual stares at the floor or the ceiling; if he or she avoids eye to eye contact, they reflect an inner turbulence which begs for escape. But there was a serene depth in the eyes of the people smiling, the people from Detroit.

But, there was more too. I watched their hands. Smiles and eyes are important, but inner peace must be activated. If it was enough for salvation to have a good heart, we would not need nor have arms, legs and the other bodily tools which enable us to express that love and to re-create the world with love.

So, I watched their hands. When people are afraid and protective, they cross their bodies with their arms and hold tightly to themselves with their hands. The proudly smiling people from Detroit had their arms and their hands interlocked with those of the person sitting next to them or with one sitting across from them. They were used to embrace bodies, stroke hurting spirits, massage aching necks.

There was a community in that group from Detroit such as I have not seen in my own religious past or in any other aspect of the gay "community." How we covet the epithet "See how these Christians love one another." Covet no longer, UFMCC.

When I attended your services, I listened as you translated the readings into Spanish for me, knowing that I perhaps did not understand the English. I felt care and concern. I watched as you signed the sermon to me because you know I perhaps did not have the gift of hearing. I was filled with a sense of belonging and when you read and you spoke to me about God and my place in the divine plan, you tried very hard to eliminate sexist language to which you knew that I might not be able to relate and thereby assured me that I was a total image of God and an equal voice in the Church. This calmed my defense mechanisms and enabled me to pray joyously and unconsciously.

"CONTINUE, UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES, TO BE A SIMPLE REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRIST . . ."

Perhaps because I am speaking from the outside, it is easier for you to hear me and perhaps easier for me to identify gifts in you that I could also see in my community if I was less involved.

But regardless of the reason, I must share a further observation. St. Paul clearly tells us that no one aspect of the body can survive on its own. As the smiles and tranquil eyes of the Detroit community were useless without the hands and feet to actualize the inner peace, so too we remember that the larger community is composed of many parts which give the body strength and purpose.

Your body is blessed, UFMCC, and strengthened by its many parts. While my experiences and observations are limited, let me describe some of your parts which I find most sensuous, in the finest sense of the word: The humaness of Troy Perry at a time in his life when he could capitalize upon his reputation; the devotedness of "Spider;" the gentle strength of Jim Sandmire; the unending courage and verve of Heather Anderson and Nancy Wilson; the sparkle of Freda Smith and the quiet support of Kathleen; the youthful zest and showpersonship of Adam DeBaugh; the inner depth of Roy Birchard; the presence of Peace in Ken Martin; the simplicity of Spirit in Dick Mickley; the unique compassion of Michael Nordstrom; the refreshing rebelliousness of Larry Bernier and the wonderful combination of all of the above qualities in one of my own favorite people, Joseph Gilbert.

The most obvious difficulty and drawback of praise is that qualities and names are inadvertently left out. Much of this, for my part, is inability to remember names and our limited vocabulary for qualities.

While I am aware that with any organization there are problems that must be worked out — personalities, theologies, religious rituals, etc. — and while I am well aware that my observations about the qualities of your gifts may not be your experiences, I also know that a family is generally harder on itself than are people from outside the family. What is important to us as Christians is the sign we give to the rest of the world and you have received from this critical and probing mind an impression of the sign you give.

In speaking briefly at the Denver UFMCC Conference I identified myself as a spiritual pilgrim wandering in the desert in search of the Promised Land. So many of us have wandered for so long that there are times we despair; we yell at Moses for ever having brought us out of the world of the heterosexual and we yell at God for not providing a sign that we are on the right track. I told you then that I saw you as a Pillar of Fire by night. Did you hear me? The love that you show one another; the ministry that you offer to so many beyond yourselves; the strength you display in dealing with difficult social issues; the many aforementioned vibrant aspects of your body are combining to present a real and legitimate sign to the others who wander in this socio-spiritual desert that we are in the presence of God and that we are well on our way to renewing the face of the earth.

Some of you know that for some time I have wrestled with the decision as to whether or not I should "join" the UFMCC. Why not, most especially given my observations of the dynamic vitality of your community and given each person's need for the love and support of a community? Because, at this point in my life, I feel I am better used by the Spirit as an observer; that my strength lies in my ability to watch and to call forth; that my message is more audible when no motives can be attached. It is an unpleasant decision, one which I have made for involvement in any religious caucus, but a prayerful decision which I trust at this point in my journey.

From that vantage point, let me share with you one fear about the Universal Fellowship. Please, in the spirit of the Spirit, stay loose and stay free. I cringe at the effect growth has had upon my Church; I ache with the knowledge that all too often we are more a scandal to the Gospels than a sign. Human weakness prompted us to save our life rather than lose it; accumulate the worldly treasures of power and reputation, buildings and committees, rather than venture forth without belongings to preach in the name of the Lord. That mentality has taken its toll on all of the products of our Church. Continue, Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, to be a simple representative of Christ, who, described by Decker was "The best of men, that e'er wore earth about Him was a sufferer; a soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit; the first true gentleman that ever breathed."

Brian McNaught, 29, is a columnist, lecturer, freelance writer, counselor and Catholic gay activist. Winner of the 1976 Journalism Award for Best Magazine Article of the Year from the Catholic Press Assn., (The Sad Dilemma of the Gay Catholic, "U.S. Catholic"), he is a 1970 graduate of Marquette University's College of Journalism. His four-year, award-winning column was dropped by "The Michigan Catholic" in 1974 when he started the Detroit chapter of Dignity. Following a 24-day water fast in protest of the sins of the Church against gay persons, he was fired by the paper and began serving Dignity as National Director of Social Action. A Boston resident, McNaught is associate editor of "Metro Gay News" and a featured columnist in a variety of gay publications.

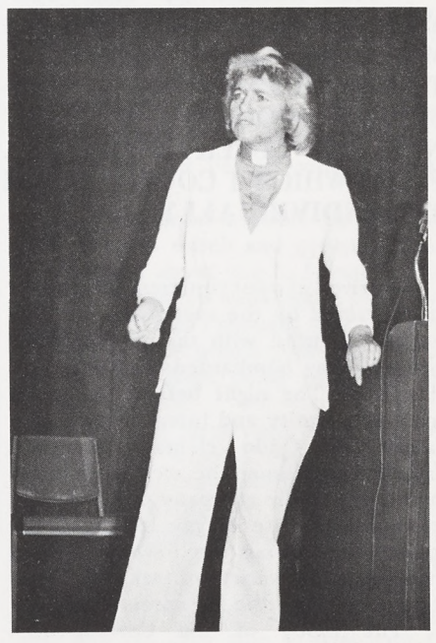
This General Conference will be known as the conference where Metropolitan Community Church came of age. This was the theme of many many of the sermons, and was a topic of discussion of groups all over the conference.

To me it was particularly significant that the participants were so much in one accord with each other in goals and directions of this fellowship. Just as the Spirit moved when the early church was in one accord, I am convinced we will be receiving a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit throughout this fellowship and shall be adding new members daily.

I hope that from this General Conference the results will be greater communication throughout all of the world and much much more lay representation in every level of our fellowship.

All in all, I believe that God has blessed us in a measure beyond human comprehension by raising up this fellowship and in calling and equipping its outstanding leaders to step out with Holy Boldness to turn the world upside down. Not since the early church has there been such a concentration of power. We are the new Reformation, we will write the theology of this age. This conference has affirmed this.

Rev. Elder Freda Smith



Impassioned MCC crowd members join in singing "We Shall Overcome" at Lincoln Memorial. Photo by Jeff Blake

PARENTS of GAYS

By Connie Harvey

During the first week of August, 1977, the UFMCC held its 8th annual General Conference in Denver, CO. There was much bustling and buzzing around in the lobby of the Cosmopolitan Hotel as the delegates and other participants arrived and greeted old friends and acquaintances they had not seen since the last Conference. The air was charged with excitement and anticipation as they settled in and prepared for the business of the conference.

Another group, not quite so busy-busy or involved in the work of the Conference, was there milling about, too. These were the parents who came to be with their sons and daughters and share their problems and joys. For some, this was the first Conference; for others, it was just the latest.

The following Parents of Gays attended the Conference: Edith Perry, Los Angeles; Irene Jones, Des Moines; Mary Smith, Sacramento; Josephine Moore, Toledo; Robt. Roderick, San Luis Obispo; Lovedy Gilbert, Phoenix; Betty Fairchild, Denver; Millie Penkava, Honolulu; Rev. Paul Van Hecke, Los Angeles; Lyllias Hubbs, San Francisco; Thelma Robbins, Long Beach; Connie Harvey, Philadelphia; Al and Margaret Smith, Wichita and David Stryker, Boston.

I have a feeling that other parents were there, but did not join the activities of the Parents of Gays. Compared to the Conference at Washington, DC, the Denver Conference produced a "bumper crop" of parents, all of whom were interested and concerned with what was going on.

The luncheon held on Wednesday, August 3, for Parents of Gays was a very chatty affair and the chit-chat lasted long beyond the luncheon.

Some parents attended some of the workshop and discussion groups; all joined in the morning and evening worship services; and they were unanimous in their enthusiasm for and interest in the Conference. The "first-timers" vowed to try to make it to the next Conference in Los Angeles in 1979, and the "Old-timers" will be there, too, Lord willing.

In many cases, the parents, as a result of being supportive of their children in their involvement in the church, have themselves become involved in the work of the church. Betty Fairchild of Denver has written a book entitled, *Parents of Gays*, and has started a Parents' organization in Washington, DC, and more recently in Denver.

Thelma Robbins of Long Beach has started a Hot Line for gays, parents of gays, and anyone else with a problem. She has also started a Parents' group which meets regularly to discuss their particular problems and concerns.

Edith Perry, needless to say, is a very involved mother, being the mother of the Founder and Moderator of the Fellowship. Lovedy Gilbert of Phoenix, Lyllias Hubbs of San Francisco, and Mary Smith of Sacramento, whose children are ministers of the church, have become an integral part of their respective churches.

Irene Jones of Des Moines is another mother with church duties and obligations. Robert Roderick of San Luis Obispo is a general handy-man, clerk, and chauffeur for his daughter, who is pastor of the San Luis Obispo congregation. He gears his time and services to his daughter's needs. David Stryker of Boston serves on the church's board of directors and is editor of the church publication. Millie Penkava of Honolulu is the mother of a gay son who does not happen to attend the church, but she is a deacon of the church and "mother" of the whole congregation. Her mother, too, is wrapped up in church activities and has become the "grandmother" of the group. Josephine Moore of Toledo is another "general mother." Rev. Paul Van Hecke of Los Angeles, a gay minister and a parent of a gay son, is on hand at every Conference and at 80 is still totally involved in his church. Others, like Helen Bennett of Buffalo, Margaret and Al Smith of Wichita, and Connie Harvey of Philadelphia, while not being active members of any MCC, are very much "there" in strong support of their children.

Everyone seemed to be of one mind: it was a wonderful Conference, interesting, informative, exciting, enjoyable, inspiring, and well-worth the expense of the trip from far corners. Who knows? Maybe we will meet again two years from now in Los Angeles, at which time many more parents may come out of their closets and join our growing group.

Some of the parents of gay women and men who attended General Conference VIII in Denver: (Top Row, L-R) Millie Denkaua, Honolulu, Hawaii; Lovedy Gilbert, Phoenix, Arizona; Mary Smith, Sacramento, California; Irene Jones, Des Moines, Iowa; Connie Harvey, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Middle Row, L-R) Albert and Margaret Smith, Wichita, Kansas; David Stryker, Boston, Massachusetts; Thelma Robbins, Long Beach, California; Robert Roderick, San Luis Obispo, California (Bottom Row, L-R) Lyllias Hubbs, San Francisco, California; Josephine Moore, Toledo, Ohio; Edith Perry, Los Angeles, California; The Rev. Paul Van Hecke, Los Angeles, California. Not present for the photograph: Betty Fairchild, Denver, Colorado; Helen Bennett, Buffalo, New York; Bern David, Los Angeles, California. *Photo by The Rev. Tom Taylor*

ORDINATION and GRADUATION 1977

by the Rev. Jeffrey Pulling

Saturday evening, August 6, 1977, Denver, CO, is a night that will always be etched in my mind. As General Conference VIII approached its conclusion, I had the unique experience and privilege of being ordained and seeing three of my students graduate on the same night. This was a real celebration of ministry for the Fellowship and for me personally.

First, Samaritan Theological Institute, UFMCC's ministerial training institution, presented its first graduating class since Samaritan changed its name and curriculum and organization plan.

The three graduating students had achieved the equivalent of a Bachelor of Theology degree with the their combined university and STI studies, and they will be awarded such a degree when STI is licensed by the state to do so. I personally have worked hard for Samaritan as Instructor, Registrar, and now Dean, and I am proud of our 1977 graduates which we have sent out to serve the Fellowship.

All three of this year's graduates are now Licensed Ministers. The Rev. Angie Umbertino is the co-pastor of MCC Akron along with her spouse, the Rev. Karen Wheeler (past Dean and past President of STI.). The Rev. Ted Richmond is on the pastoral staff of MCC Detroit. The Rev. Lucia Chapelle is working in the Fellowship headquarters in Los Angeles while she seeks a pastoral position. We, the staff of Samaritan, were so happy to share this graduation with the whole Fellowship at General Conference.

Secondly, all the newly Licensed Ministers were introduced and a prayer was offered for them as they started their MCC ministerial careers.

Thirdly, came the very moving Ordination of six UFMCC Clergy: the Rev. Thomas Bigelow (MCC Nashville), the Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey (MCC Houston), the Rev. Richard Mickley (Director of Publication, UFMCC Headquaters, Los Angeles), The Rev. Philip Speranza (MCC Ottowa), the Rev. A Evan St. Ives (MCC Sarasota), and myself (Dean, Samaritan Theological Institute, Los Angeles).

I had been so pre-occupied with the STI graduation and planning the Seminar on Worship that I taught at General Conference, that I had scarsely taken the time to prepare myself adequately for my Ordination. I had thought about ordination for years and was really grateful that the Fellowship was now recognizing my teaching and counseling ministry at Samaritan as important, but somehow I had become more "hyper" about preparing for Samaritan's first Fellowship-wide graduation.

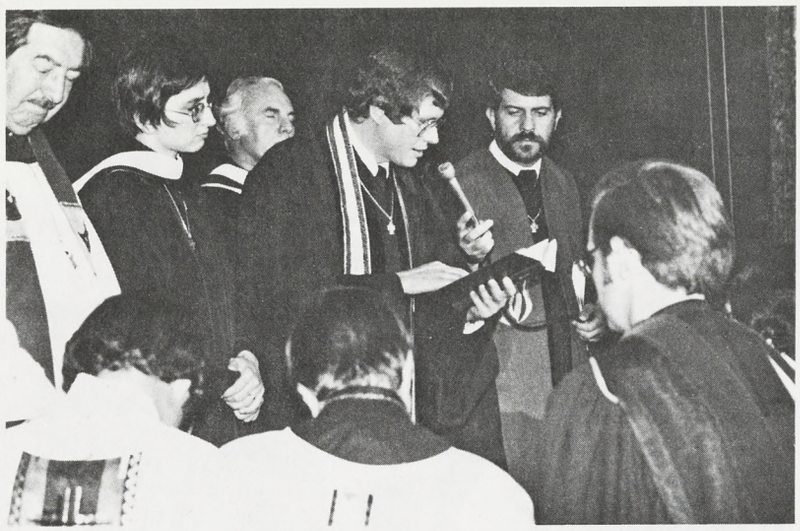
As the Rev. Elder Troy Perry and the other Elders ordained those before me, all of a sudden it hit me that the Church to which I have dedicated my energies is acknowledging and celebrating my full, life-time commitment to the professional ministry in this denomination. I knew this rite would not "make" me a minister, but this public affirmation and prayer for the ministry to which God has called me was very important to me.

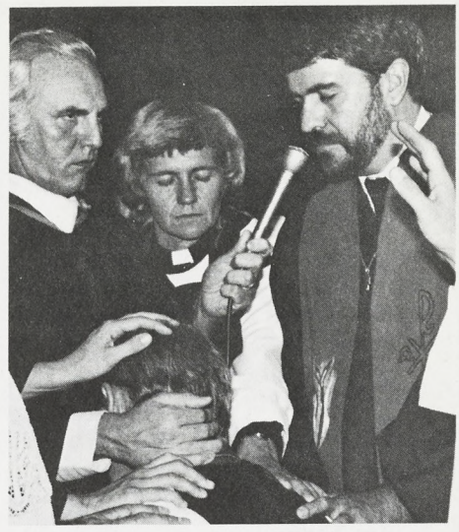
My parents had flown from Vermont to this Conference in Denver so that they could share this time with me, and one of my brothers had driven down from Montana. I was very conscious of their presencein the congregation along with many friends and students of mine.

As my turn came, I knelt for the "laying on of hands," and I was moved to tears as every one of Troy's words went directly to my heart. I felt the presence of God all around me. I experienced in a very real way the warmth and support of the Elders around me, and that of my sponsor and dear friend, the Rev. Heather Anderson, and all the people present. I was indeed lifted up to God in prayer, and I knew God was affirming what this gathering of Christians was doing. I found out that this moment even moved my usually "stoic" parents to tears, and I was so happy that they could share this with me and witness MCC at its best.

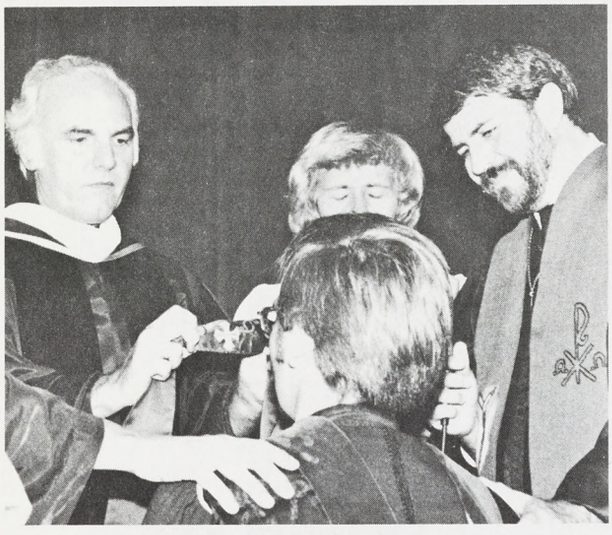
After the Ordinations, the MCC San Diego Joyful Noise Choir led us through the rest of the evening praising the God who had called us together — by performing the stirring cantata, "Alleluia."

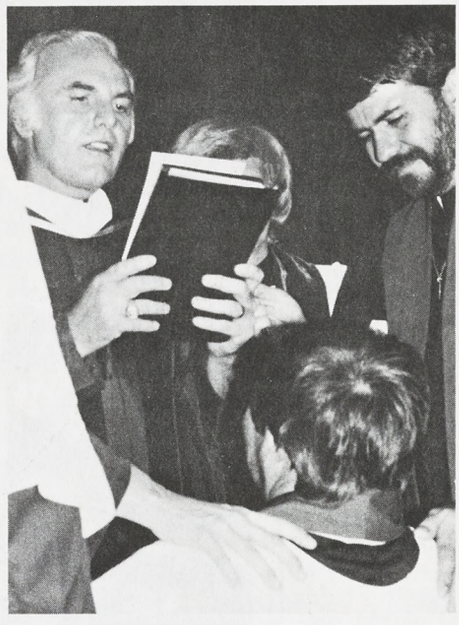
Yes, that was an evening I will always cherish in my memory.



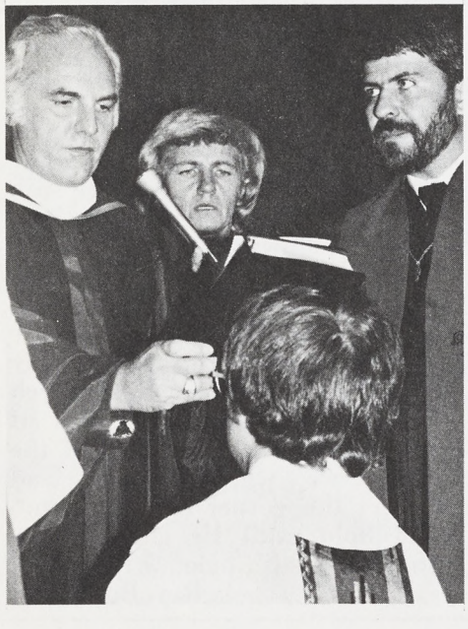


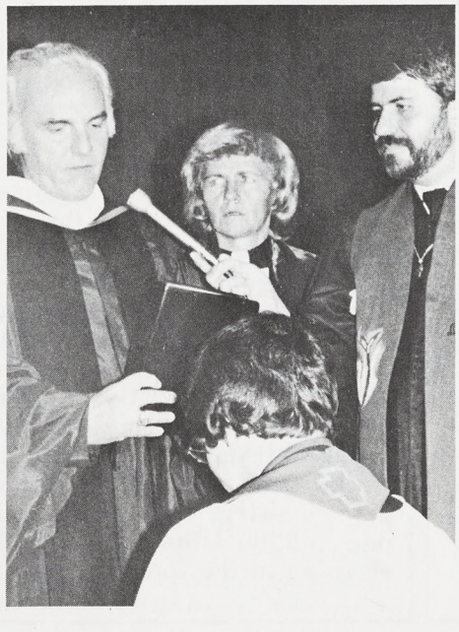
The Rev. Elder Charlie Arehart reads the charge and commission to the ordinands prior to the Laying on of hands by the members of the Board of Elders.

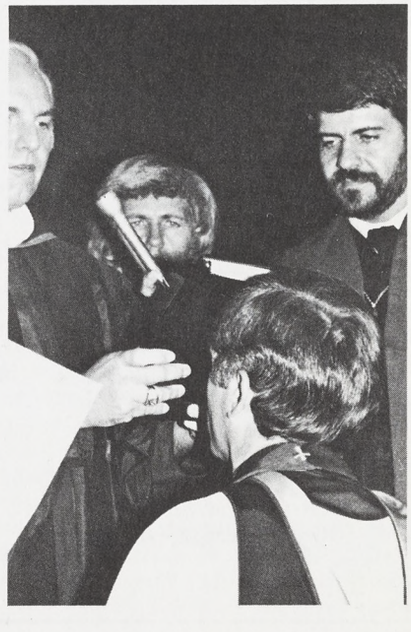




(Top R.) Laying on of Hands for the Rev. Richard Mickley. (Middle L.) Investiture with stole for the Rev. Jeffrey Pulling. (Middle R.) Investiture with Bible for the Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey. (Bottom L.) Investiture with Bible for the Rev. Evan St. Ives. (Bottom Center) Investiture with Bible for the Rev. Philip Speranza. (Bottom R.) Investiture with Bible for the Rev. Thomas Bigelow.
Photos by
Peter, photographer







NEWLY LICENSED MINISTERS

The following ministers were approved for licensing and were seated in the Clergy House at the Eighth General Conference:

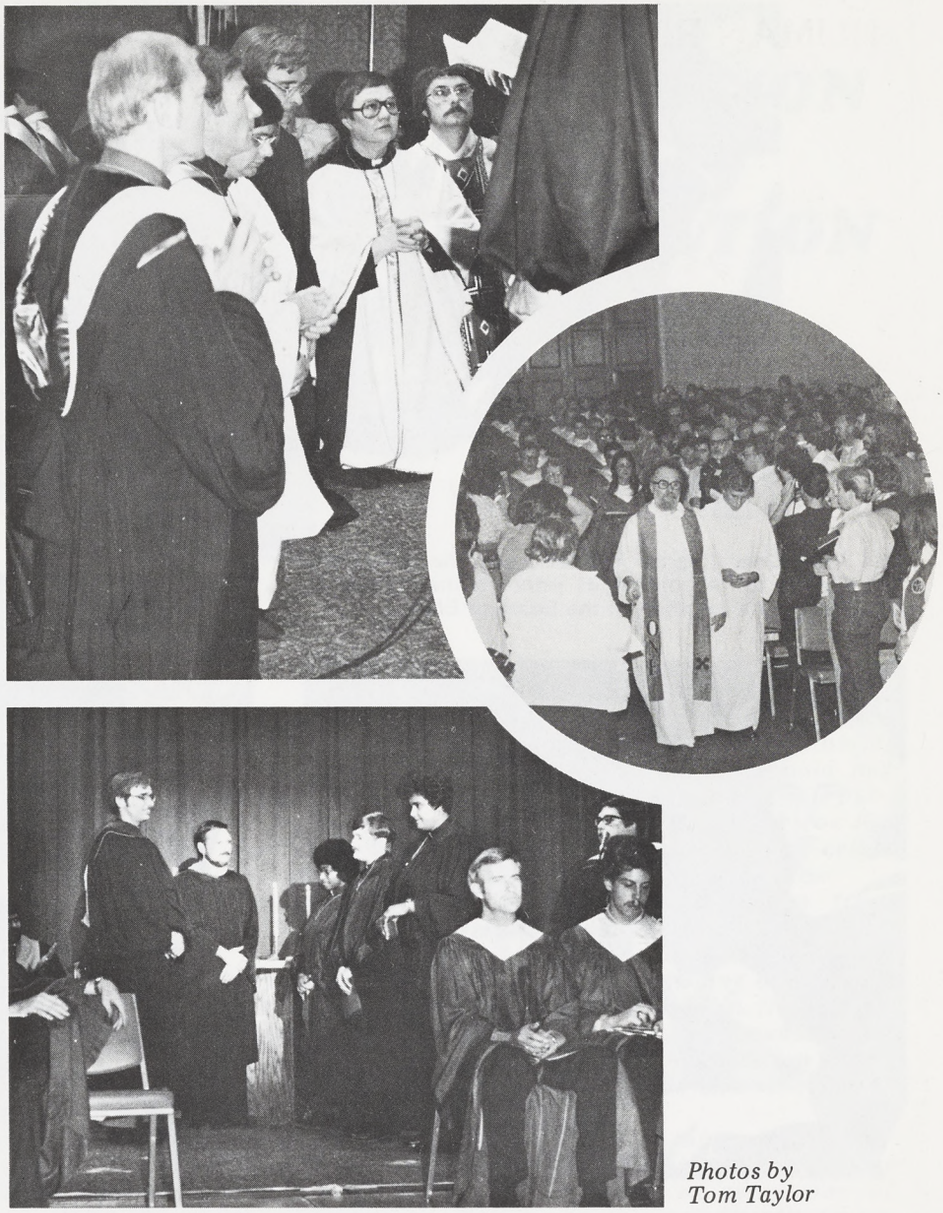
Rev. Arlene Ackerman
Rev. Lucia Chappelle
Rev. Clifford Connors
Rev. Judy Davenport
Rev. Buff Fisher
Rev. David Gillentine
Rev. Shelley Hamilton
Rev. Wallace Hargrave
Rev. Jacquelyn Harris
Rev. Brent Hawkes
Rev. Renee Hein
Rev. F. Randall Hill
Rev. Janet Howard
Rev. Susan Kliebenstein
Rev. Sherry James
Rev. Michael Jensen
Rev. Steve LeFever
Rev. Jon Landre
Rev. Sandra McMillan
Rev. Fred Pattison
Rev. Steve Quesnel
Rev. Marjorie Ragona
Rev. Ted Richmond
Rev. Earl Schmidt
Rev. Arthur Skipper
Rev. Weldon Stewart
Rev. Charlene Taylor
Rev. William Taylor
Rev. Clifford Turpin
Rev. Robert W. Twar
Rev. Angeline Umbertino
Rev. Robert Waldrop
Rev. Karen Wheeler
Rev. Willie White
Rev. Karen Ziegler

The newly Ordained and Licensed ministers bring the denominational total to 57 Ordained Ministers and 94 Licensed Ministers for a total of 151 professional ministers in the UFMCC.

NEWLY ORDAINED MINISTERS

The following ministers, having served one or more years in the professional ministry as Licensed Ministers in MCC, were approved for ordination by the Ministerial Credentials and Affairs Committee, meeting in Denver:

Rev. Thomas S. Bigelow
Rev. Carol S. Cureton
Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey
Rev. Edward T. Hougen
Rev. Richard R. Mickley
Rev. Jeffrey D. Pulling
Rev. Frank W. Scott
Rev. Philip J. Speranza
Rev. A. Evan St. Ives
Rev. Gilbert Lincoln



Photos by Tom Taylor

For me everywhere I looked I saw a new spiritual revival going on and a new awareness that the task is just begun. I saw racism, sexism, ageism, and nationalism which in the past, had threatened to split our fellowship. But there was a wave of hope that we had all had our consciousness raised to the level of loving concern instead of useless arguing. Programs really came to the front and everywhere was the question "how can we reach more people for Christ?" From Christian education to new works, rural ministry, and a campus ministry that could reach one million students per year, all rising to the fore as the church looked at where it has come from and sought to return with new vitality to its first love. The acknowledgement of the great resource our fellowship has in its lay people, saw a conference seek to tap that resource at every level of our fellowship structure. Missions and study groups so often considered infant groups and given little or no voice were given the right of membership acknowledging them as being real church bodies rather than some sort of non-entity. With the help of the Lord, we will evangelize and spread the gospel to every land, and hold until He comes. Even so, Lord Jesus Come . . .

Rev. Bob Miller

THE GAY CHRISTIAN

A journal of theological reflection from Metropolitan Community Church

Ben Shahn

The Leather Scene as Liberation

MCC MEMBERS WHO attended the "Affirmation '76" rally in Lafayette Park at the 1976 General Conference may have noticed the presence of a number of leather/levi club members in the security detail that afternoon. Responding to a request for assistance from General Conference planners, a number of the men from the Washington, D.C., area cycle clubs acted as marshalls under the supervision of U.S. Park Service police. Their visibility underscored the presence in the gay community of the leather/levi clubs, their bars and other social institutions and their role within the leadership of the gay community.

When Police Chief Ed Davis of Los Angeles attacked a fundraising benefit "slave auction" for the Gay Community Services Center sponsored by the leather/levi segment of the community last spring, he attempted to paint them as modernday Simon Legrees. His efforts backfired when Los Angeles gays rallied to their support and began a public information campaign which turned the local media coverage of the battle 180 degrees around.

Who then are the leathermen, and how do they fit into the gay subculture? If, as is sometimes asserted, they are hostile to religion and gay liberation, how is it that some of them in fact serve in key positions within MCC congregations and other gay community organizations?

To begin with, as organizations within the gay movement have blossomed during the past seven years, new visible constituencies have emerged. As increasing numbers of gay and bisexual persons have involved themselves in the movement, more specialized organizations have been created. Thus the organizational children of the Gay Liberation Fronts and Gay Activist Alliances of 1969-70 include the Gay Academic Union, the various gay political clubs, most of them affiliated with the Democratic Party, the Lesbianism and Sexuality task forces of the National Organization for Women, the several mainline Protestant gay caucuses, Dignity and MCC, not to mention the many commercial establishments and businesses now visibly gay-owned and operated.

During this period of organizational evolution, there has been a parallel of the leather/levi community. Today there are between 50 and 75 gay motorcycle clubs in North America with 30-50 members each. Dallas has two, Boston four, the Baltimore-Washington area 11, and there are 15-20 in the New York metropolitan area. It is estimated that the five clubs in Los Angeles involve 150-175 people in varying degrees. The October 1975 issue of Scene & Machine, *a national leather/levi monthly formerly published in Washington, D.C., listed 20 "runs" for the three-month period October-December 1975. These weekend-long "runs" took place in cities like Montreal, Los Angeles, Houston, St. Louis, Washington and New York, each drawing 100-200 people for weekends of socializing rather like the gay equivalent of Shriners or Elks conventions.*

Performing some of the functions of a family, a college fraternity, and the Kiwanis Club, these leather/levi groups are in most ways distinct and separate entities from the gay movement, yet they are virtually 100% gay and include, as we have indicated, persons who carry leadership roles in the gay movement. The national "Nestea" dances which benefit the national Gay Task Force and the Gay Rights National Lobby began at the Eagle bar in New York, asix for L/L activities in the Northeast U.S.

In an effort to gain wider understanding in the gay community of the L/L (leather/levi) people, The Gay Christian *presents the following essay, "The Leather Scene as Liberation" by Rick Weatherly, followed by a dialogue involving some aspects of the L/L scene. The writers are: Rick Weatherly, 23, an exhorter in MCC Washington, D.C., and a student at George Washington University, involved in the gay liberation movement since 1971 and the leather scene since 1973; and Roy Birchard, 33, a UFMCC minister and formerly church relations staff person of the UFMCC field office in Washington, D.C., formerly managing editor of* Scene and Machine, *a defunct national leather monthly. Founding editor of* TGC, *he is currently organizing a new MCC congregation in Norfolk, VA.*

"GAY?" SAID THE bike club member, hitching up his levis, "I'm homosexual, but I'll be damned if I'm a faggot."

Oppressive language to be sure, but it is one end result of a mutual rejection and isolation that has bred contempt among homosexual males and has divided people who should have been allies. Furthermore, to some MCCers who frequent leather bars or belong to gay motorcycle clubs, it presumes an unbridgeable separation between the burgeoning leather community and the gay rights movement that really isn't there. In light of the success of military gay liberation figures like Dennie Beller and Leonard Mtlovich in gaining the support of leather enthusiasts, and taking into account the large number of MCC ministers and laity who flocked to Washington, D.C.'s Eagle bar in full leather/levi attire during the '76 General Conference, it may be time to take a close look at what is loosely referred to as the "levi/leather/western/bike club" crowd and its place both within MCC and in the general gay community.

In dealing with such an emotionally-charged topic, it would be best to be as clear as possible as to what is under discussion and what is not. To begin with, this article is *not* an attempt to deal with that set of little-understood sexual behaviors known as sadomasochism (S&M). While the leather scene is related (and unrelated) to S&M, it is not the focus of this examination. Rather, the focus is on that part of the gay male community which esteems the traditional concepts of masculine dress and behavior, and in trying to see whether this "scene" contributes to liberation or not.

It would also be helpful to define my use of the word, "liberation." In the report of the Task Force on Men to the Seventh Annual General Conference, the following passage appears:

> Human liberation does not stem from individual or social needs alone, but that these needs are part of the same process. We feel that all liberation movements are equally important; there is no hierarchy of oppression. *Every group must speak its own language, assume its own form, take its own action;* and when each of these groups learns to express itself in harmony with the rest, this will create a basis for all-embracing social change. (Emphasis added.)

What, however, is the "leather scene"?

The leather scene is the most visible part of a growing number of gay men who have rejected effeminate behavior as a norm for themselves and who seek to return (or if they have not left, then to maintain) a traditionally-masculine manner of dress and behavior. By that, I would include a deep voice with a lisp, a firm, heavy walk (as opposed to mincing), the wearing of levis, rather than double-knit slacks, and, for embellishment, chains rather than makeup and glitter. In short: "leather" rather than "lace." (The use of the term "traditionally masculine" is deliberate and reflects the realization of how subjective masculine dress and behavior can be, both from culture to culture and person to person. Such manifestations of dress and behavior are not "innately" masculine [if there is such a thing], but rather within our culture in the U.S., these are generally considered the signs of masculinity.)

The question that immediately arises concerning this movement back to traditional masculine standards is of course, Why, in this day of women's liberation, men's liberation, and gay liberation, is there such a growing interest among some gay men in manners of behavior and dress that belong to the dominant (i.e., straight male) culture?

Some have charged that is a reaction, a going-against, liberation, that these men are fleeing freedom, having found it impossible to cope with, and are seeking safety in "tried and true" standards. Some have suggested that beyond a fleeing of liberation, the leather scene constitutes an anti-liberation clique in which racist, Fascist, and sexist males can perpetuate their hatred of others in community with like-minded men.

While such explanations might account for some part of the leather scene, as a comprehensive explanation this "reaction" concept fails. To insist that the explanation lies in "reaction" is simplistic at best and at worst betrays an essential bias against the scene. If the scene is essentially anti-liberation, why are some of the leading figures in gay liberation part of the leather scene? And why (and this is the most important question) do so many men who enter the leather scene find that their entry provides them with a degree of liberation they had not experienced elsewhere? To continue to insist that the scene attracts only pseudo-Nazis or freedom-fleeing pathetics is to refuse to deal with that liberation some men claim the scene provides.

But, if the leather scene does provide liberation, it must be asked, "liberated from what?"

When a man "comes out" into the general gay bar scene and the institutions of the gay community and begins to associate with other gay men, an acculturation process begins. Since effeminate behavior and dress is the standard, new entrants usually adopt in a gradual process the behavior and dress of those with whom they wish to identify. The process is usually subtle and sufficiently gradual that most men are unaware of their growing effeminacy, and indeed, many obviously effeminate men react with surprise and hostility when referred to as such.

This process is no different from that experienced by anyone moving from one culture to another. Move to another country or region of your country and you'll soon be talking and acting like the people around you. But why is a similar change from masculine to the effeminate perceived as oppressive, or at least as less-than-desirable? And why is it being rejected by a growing number of gay men?

The answer seems to lie in the "power bestowing" ability of gay liberation itself. Subject to arrest for private sexual activity in most states, discriminated against and abused in all sections of this culture, and held in fear and contempt by the dominant culture, gay people—like women and blacks-perceive themselves as powerless. Like many oppressed groups, some of its members have internalized the oppression and even feel *unworthy* of power. To identify with the gay community has often been to identify with powerlessness. This sense of powerlessness is often expressed by effeminacy.

Masculine behavior and dress are symbols of a "powerful" person. Women were quick to notice the fact, and early feminists frequently adopted masculine dress and behavior to express their rejection of the powerless status given them by the dominant culture. Effeminacy, insofar as it symbolizes weakness, is a reflection of powerlessness.

All liberation movements are "empowerment" movements. They give

the weak power, the self-despising self respect, the oppressed freedom. In a time of liberation and empowerment, an increasing number of gay men are beginning to question the unexamined, often automatic and involuntary adoption of behavior and dress that seems to reflect powerlessness rather than liberation.

The leather scene reflects this rejection of powerlessness. Its members adopt manners of speech and dress (often to what may seem an exaggerated degree) that they identify as masculine, as powerful. Thus we have leather bars full of men dressed up like police, hardhats, soldiers, 1950s-style motorcycle gangs, etc., all symbols of powerful people.

Nor, it should be added is such dress always pretense. Many in the leather scene are actually engaged in these professions. Since I've been at the Washington Eagle, I've met carpenters, plumbers, bricklayers, ranchers, hardhats, cops, Marines, senior military NCOs and officers, motorcycle riders, telephone installers, and in my three-to-four-year habitation of fluff bars, I *never* met any of these (except for Marines and military officers; they're *everywhere.*) They are by no means a majority of the Eagle crowd, but they are there in substantial numbers, and they are not in the fluff bars.

To many of these men, masculinity is not just desirable but emphatically necessary to their self respect. And they see the leather scene as their only possible contact with the gay community. Many of them claim that until their community got its first leather bar, that for years they never went to *any* gay establishment. These men perceived that the end result of such associations would be loss of their masculinity, and they rejected it at the cost of being any part of the gay community. This rejection, and the resultant years of isolation, has produced among many of the "old hands" in the leather scene a great hostility to the wider gay community and frequently a refusal to acknowledge being part of it—the sort of attitude represented by the club member quoted earlier.

But as frequently as one encounters such hostility, one encounters similar vicious and unloving remarks directed against the leather scene by those involved in the effeminate gay male scene. Granting the "seeming strangeness" of the symbols chosen by the leather scene to express its sense of power, it must be remembered that any liberation group ". . .must speak its own language, assume its own form, take its own action."

This applies no less to the leather scene and its nascent sense of community than it does to gay people in general. The liberation that is in Christ Jesus (and this liberation is at work as much, if not more, out of the Church as within) is for every person from every sort of oppression, and it is for each person and group of persons to decide whether they are oppressed and to take such actions as *they* see fit to end that oppression and to erase it from their lives and personalities.

But despite the present alienation between some of those gay men who choose to adopt effeminacy as a symbol of liberation and those who reject such behavior and dress as symnbols of powerlessness, there is every reason to hope that this alienation will pass away. Already with the increasing number of leather bars, bike clubs, etc., there is a growing mood of respect and acceptance among the general gay male community and a lessened feeling of isolation and hostility within the leather scene as the scene grows and takes in more men who have not suffered from the old sense of rejection and isolation and who identify more closely with the gay community as a whole.

> And when each group learns to express itself in harmony with the rest, this will create a basis for all-embracing social change.

So we fervently hope and, as Christians ministering to a divided and very new community, we must be deeply involved in ending this alienation. MCC must be a place in which all segments of the gay community, most emphatically *including* the men of the leather scene, can find a place of refuge and support and empowerment. If we close our doors to any group, no matter how odd their symbols may be to us, then we reject our Christ and become oppressors ourselves.

Response by Roy Birchard: Rick Weatherly's look at the L/L scene arises from a serious and persistent exploration of that scene over a period of several years. Some of his points about the scene, however, raise further questions.

For one thing, the social groups that gay males involve themselves in bear quite a few similarities once you get beneath the surface. The whole drag and royal court phenomenon, after all, presents an acting-out using symbols of another sort of power than what the L/L scene involves. (Emperors, queens and movie stars, after all, are figures of power and prestige.)

Yet neither the drag clubs nor the royal courts give S&M the place it holds in the L/L scene. Why? Can sadomasochism be so easily dismissed when discussing the L/L scene? How large a role does it play in the lives of the people who are into it, and what does it mean for them?

I am by no means hostile to S&M and find some of its role-reversal and penitential acting-out potentially helpful. Maybe it has sprung up as a secular replacement for the abandoned rigors of the Christian Church's penitential system. One of the major ongoing pastoral tasks of the Church always has been dealing with the human guilt, repentance and regeneration cycle.

There seems to be a real avoidance of discussing S&M in the Fellowship, although in my travels around I have met quite a few persons who are, or have been, into S&M. The association of S&M with the L/L scene is more than coincidental, I think. There seems to be no equivalent connection with the other subsections of the gay world.

Another point is that Weatherly says that for some men, the leather bar has been the first gay establishment of any kind they have frequented, and he says that many men he has talked to were repelled years ago by the effiminacy they found as the standard behavior of the old-time gay bar. But people are complicated, and they react to their total situation as it evolves. Maybe they *say* they were repelled by the nelliness of yore, but in those days there was, additionally, an absence of all our present-day social alternatives; in their place were severe social and legal penalties, anonymity, ignorance and fear about the whole business of being gay both by gay and non-gay people. . .and a few downtown bars. The whole situation has changed, Was the nelliness really the key?

Yet I do think the L/L scene that has grown up in the last few years provides some "liberation space," particularly for older men who feel out-of-place in some of the gay liberation organizations dominated by people in their twenties and thirties. A forty-five-year-old executive may not be psychologically prepared to attend an outdoor rally for gay rights or join a gay political club, but he may gain a great deal of personal satisfaction from belonging to a cycle club made up of men his own age with similar interests. And on the weekend, or at the cycle run, he can strut in his club's colors and display the symbols of his masculine, gay identity. Compared to the lonely homosexual of the 1950s, staring at the walls of his apartment or cruising outdoor areas for anonymous public sex, this gay man has made progress.

Still, some leather men have complained to me about how "jaded" or bored they are with the scene. While you can strut your colors down at the bar on the weekend, it's strictly a dark-of-night manhood. For every bike club member who showed up at Lafayette Park for the rally last August there must have been two or three who did not. I guess I feel that while these men are in a better space than formerly, the walls have been on slightly expended. But maybe the liberation party expects too much.

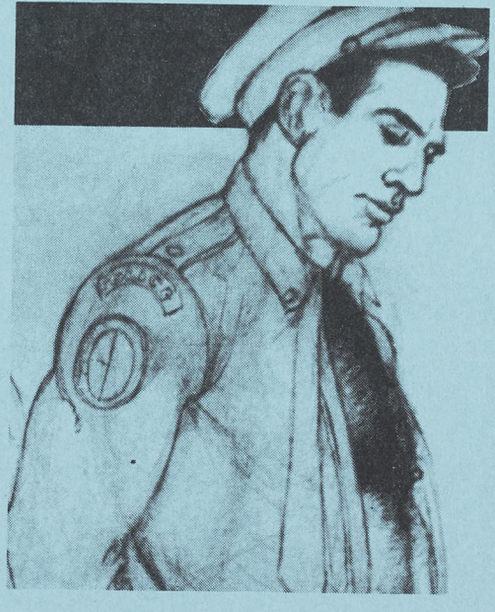
The problem I have with Weatherly's overall thesis is that I doubt one can neatly equate powerlessness and effeminacy. Certainly one cannot equate powerlessness with feminity. The drag queen in full, regal splendour and the leather macho dripping chains array themselves in polarly-opposite sets of symbols to achieve more or less the same effect: the stunning visual display of power and beauty. A physically slight, balding male can, through the artful application of feminine symbols, become a killer lady; while a Congressional aide, through a similar exercise, can present himself to admiring eyes as the modern equivalent of a pirate. Both have made themselves into something other than what they are in everyday life through a fantastic transformation, but are the two transformation processes so different?

In my own experience, I am more impressed by the pendulum swings in our public behavior. Before the pre-liberated average American gay male accepts his homosexuality, he may act out a determinedly-masculine public demeanor, even if at considerable psychic cost. When, in due course, he moves into the gay scene, he may indulge himself in splurges nof effeminism. The quiet, buttoned-down middle class boy becomes loud and nellie. But after a few years of this, psychic forces begin to balance the scale. Neither the repressed, buttoned-down personality, nor the shrieking disco dancer role adds up to the sum total of anybody's personality. People progress on to a sort of working androgynity: we are both butch and femme, and if a male, our lifelong maleness may carry more psychic weight than our being a *gay* male. Eventually, the pendulum draws us somewhere nearer the center.

And part of this, I think, is just aging and the concomitant integration and stabilization of personality which aging brings. Gay male discos attract a younger crowd and reward fresh-from-the-closet feminity. The leather bar draws a somewhat-older group, less conscious maybe of immaculate physical attractiveness.

Yet every time I generalize on the subject of the L/L scene, I am painfully aware of how many examples from my own experience contradict the generalizations I am trying to make. Sexual identity is more a rain forest than a neat village, and every human being is capable of containing within him/herself hundreds of apparent contradictions.

One final curiosity may show what I mean. When I first came out several years ago, I noticed that at 5' 11", when I was in most gay bars, I was more or less a tall person; in leather bars, I was average height. Part of the reason for someone's identifying with an L/L social scene rather than a disco may be that a hulking two hundred pounder makes a poor disco dancer. The L/L scene rewards the lumbering male hunk and equips him with symbols and a setting that embellishes his bulk.



Beyond that, society treats tall people differently than short people. The United States Senate is full of tall men. Most U.S. Presidents have been physically tall men. (Mayor Abraham Beame of New York may be the short public official who proves the rule.) Men who are tall and muscular are presumed to be more "masculine" and "powerful" than the small and slight, at least as far as traditional public leadership roles go, and the leather scene may reward this symbol assignment within the gay setting.

On the other hand, what do you make of 5' 8" sadists, several of whom I am acquainted with? Or is the short sadist's role the compensation short people make for living during working hours in a world of giants? One conundrum leads to another. The mind seeking to make neat sense of all this is humbled.

Response by Weatherly: The aspect of your work with which I have the greatest reservation is your discussion of S&M on a level which I believe the public at large, in its present state of edification, is unable to follow. Though I would be unopposed to a consideration of S&M in another set of articles, I believe you begin with the discussion of S&M on a level which might be understood by many who are familiar with it, but I believe the general public needs some more material of a basic educational nature before that happens. I might add that those committed to S&M are very hesitant about such public discussions and are opposed to neophytes (you and I) speaking out on topics which the "old hands" have the only "proper competence" to speak.

Furthermore, there really is, I'm now convinced, a genuine "non-relatedness" between S&M and the leather scene, and I am not sure that S&M is reall germane to the discussion.

I think a major divergence between the two of us is our level of commitment to the leather scene. I have invested a great deal of myself into the scene and eager to defend and strengthen it. I sense in you a greater desire, well, to deprecate it.

For instance, while granting the surface similarities between drag and

leather, it is a traditional put-down of leather to equate the two as you have done. Are you working through some sort of hostility to leather? People on the verge of a major commitment to the scene often act similarly.

I object strenously to your attempt to equate effeminacy with femininity, thus opening up the whole feminism/androgyny can of worms. The adoption *by males* of feminine behavior is the item under discussion, not femininity or lack of it among women.

You seem to suggest, though it's never clearly stated, that male entrants to the gay community adopt effeminacy as an act of freedom and glory, for a short period of time, in that freedom. This assertion really does beg the question. The "freedom" that many of our new nelly brothers find in effeminacy is freedom from self respect, responsibility, competence, and (considering nelly viciousness) freedom from kindness and humanitarianism. Not that this is the case in *most* people, but for many I believe it is.

The reason you may find many gainfully-employed people, people in professions of power and influence, in the leather scene is that the fluff bar scene is composed of your typical file clerk, hairdresser, dog groomer, etc., a set of people who flee power and influence and adopt subsidiary, servant professions and who adopt effeminacy as the sign of their weakness and subservience ("Just us girls here, Mary!").

Wouldn't your average self-respecting male in an influential profession grow eventually alienated from the fluff crowd and seek to identify with a group more like himself?

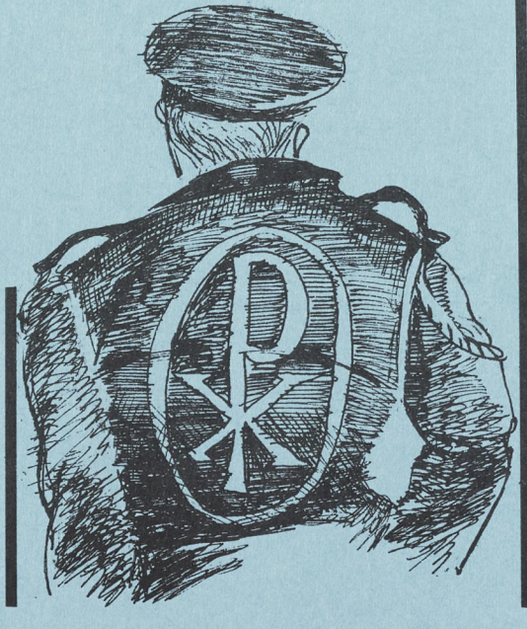
There is nothing unhealthy when a person who finds wholeness in subservience is subservient. (What kind of M would I be!) But it *is* unhealthy and oppressive for a person to do the gay = inferior = 'me inferior equation and adopt subservience. There's no wholeness in that.

I would question also your assertion of a butch to nelly to butch/nelly dialectic. I've seen far too many people going through a thirty-year-long "splurge" of effeminacy with no end in sight.

There is a fable that I think applies quite well to our two very different views of the leather scene. While most of us have heard it, its origin and context are not often realized (it comes from Buddhist scripture). The fable concerns several blind men and an elephant. Taken to the elephant and asked to describe the beast, they proceed to examine our trunked friend. One, grabbing ahold of a leg, exclaims, "An elephant is like a tree!" Another, grabbing the tail, counters, "No, it is like a rope." Still another, having encountered the trunk, complains, "You're both wrong! An elephant is like a large snake."

In an attempt to examine a hitherto-unexamined area, there is always this original blindness to the whole and many mistaken assumptions due to personal (therefore: subjective) experience.

Birchard and I joined this effort in beginning an examination of the leather scene not because either of us considered ourselves "experts." Rather, we did it to encourage those who know more than we to begin to speak. But after that original agreement of motives, our ways parted. "The Leather Scene as Liberation" was my effort to explain but a single aspect of the leather scene and the desire of some gay men to reject personal effeminacy in dress and behavior and to act and dress in a traditionally masculine manner. I am, as it were, trying to present an examination only of the elephant's tail, realizing well that there is a whole animal attached. Birchard (to drag the analogy even further) seems to dash madly about the beast grabbing first an ear, then a leg, now its tail and presenting us with neither the whole animal nor a clear view of one part.



Such, however, is life. Who knows which way will give us our first comprehensive view of the subject in question?

Birchard responds: In 1864, the British Association planned a debate at Bath between the African explorers Richard Burton and John Speke about the probably location of the source of the Nile. David Livingstone, another 19th century explorer, was at home in Scotland and planned to attend. The day before the debate, John Speke was killed in a hunting accident. This tragedy increased rather than diminished public speculation about the Nile's source. As a result, the Royal Geographical Society and the British Foreign Office sponsored Livingstone in an expedition to solve the riddle of the central African lakes once and for all.

If we spur on some Livingstone of the leather psyche, we will have done enough. So much for elephants!

Weatherly's treatment of the leather scene is truncated by his avoidance of the subject of S&M, though useful as far as he goes. But the leather milieu is permeated with the S&M scene; it is always there.

The thesis Weatherly promotes of gay males embracing symbols of power do not explain S&M relationships, why or how people have sex or explore relationships. They put on leather jackets and go out seeking interrelationships, sex, or companionship.

There is an interrealationship of dominance and submission. No sexual relation takes place on a basis of equality. Individuals may reverse roles from occasion to occasion, and masters may share slaves, but two masters don't get together and both be masters—somebody has to be dominant.

The question of S&M does not have to do with the giving and receiving of pain. It has, rather, to do with pride. Like the martial arts, there is the pride in doing a job well. The artful demonstration of physical stamina, emotional strength and fortitude—these are what counts for the S. The m finds his pride in serving well. So the satisfaction comes from performing service well or demanding well. Attached to this are emotional overtones of caring and responsibility. Among those carrying the submissive role, there is a family-type relationship of mutual responsibilities and caring of one for another.

"Lord, this is a friend of mine . . ."

By Joseph Gilbert

BECAUSE WE ARE a Christian church one might expect that the great divisions among us would be over theological or ecclesiological issues. Christians have traditionally permitted themselves to battle one another "in love" over the purity of the faith. But if it is true that we have made new skins for new wine, maybe we can avoid this plague of controversy. And I see signs that this is the case. I believe we are learning to respect other people's religious devotions and to show the beauty of ours to them.

But I am concerned that we may be rushing to judgement in another area. It seems to me that a people who stand, according to Leviticus, in bloodguiltiness need to give some very real thought to Christian morality. I believe that through Christ's life, death and resurrection I am free of the judgement of that Levitical law. But I see brothers and sisters of this fellowship daring to judge the lives of themselves and others not on the basis of "What would Christ have me do?" but "What laws apply to me?"

I do not pretend to have any special access to Christ's wisdom. I have found that ordination made me neither wiser, nor holier, than I was before. If a man calls me at three o'clock in the morning and whispers "I'm married. I have children. I want to maintain my home and family. But increasingly, I realize I am gay. What do I do?". . .I am not always sure what Christ would have me to say. Or someone comes to me with a problem unique to his or her lifestyle which I do not understand, and I am not always sure what Christ would have me say. I find myself in sexual situations in which I am not always sure what Christ would have me do.

But I do know I am forbidden to simply turn to the law. . .any code at all. . .and say "This is the answer." Instead I must see what actions will reflect God's love and our lovableness. One of the finest couples I know in this Fellowship do not define loyalty to each other in terms of "body-fidelity." Their love for each other permits sexual contacts outside that relationship. I believe theirs is a true and honest love. And yet I find myself sometimes asking what effect they have on the lives of others. . . persons with whom they have casual sex.

Because I know these two people, I believe that each such person knows that he has been truly perceived as a real person. That very attitude may well legitimize an act that others might consider immoral. But the lack of it may very well flaw an act that others might consider moral.

Not too long ago I was being taken to the airport in one of our cities. Up front, two of the brothers were talking. In the back, a young man I love and respect very much rode beside me. In the middle of an otherwise casual conversation, he handed me a pack of matches advertising one of the local baths, smiled and pointed to himself. I asked if he had enjoyed himself. "Yes," he said "but I was afraid you would think less of me for having been there." I said that I suspected there was often a great deal of lovingkindness at the baths. He remarked that he had seen more acts of Christian charity that night at the baths than he sometimes did in church.

And I suspect that he might be right. I believe that there were probably men there that night—men whom you and I might want to judge—who could have interrupted what they were doing, turned to Jesus Christ and without embarrassment said "Lord, this is a friend of mine." I wish that were always true of all of us in our churches.

I have become aware that more women in our community think in terms of "body-fidelity" than do men. Yet I think of one woman I know who uses untypical definitions. And I respect the courage it takes to make her own definitions of what are and are not loving acts. . .what is loyalty and what is not. . .what is seemly and what is not. And I am in fear and trembling because that courage is called forth because people. . .you and I. . .are trying to define and judge in areas we are forbidden.

I am not suggesting license. I do not know the answers. But I beleive that this is an area we must begin to discuss. We must begin to give real, and not superficial, thought to gay Christian ethics and morality. It is not licit for us to go back into some sort of Levitical closet. But let us search out God's will for us, so that at any time, during any sexual encounter, we could turn to Christ and say, "Lord, this is a friend of mine."

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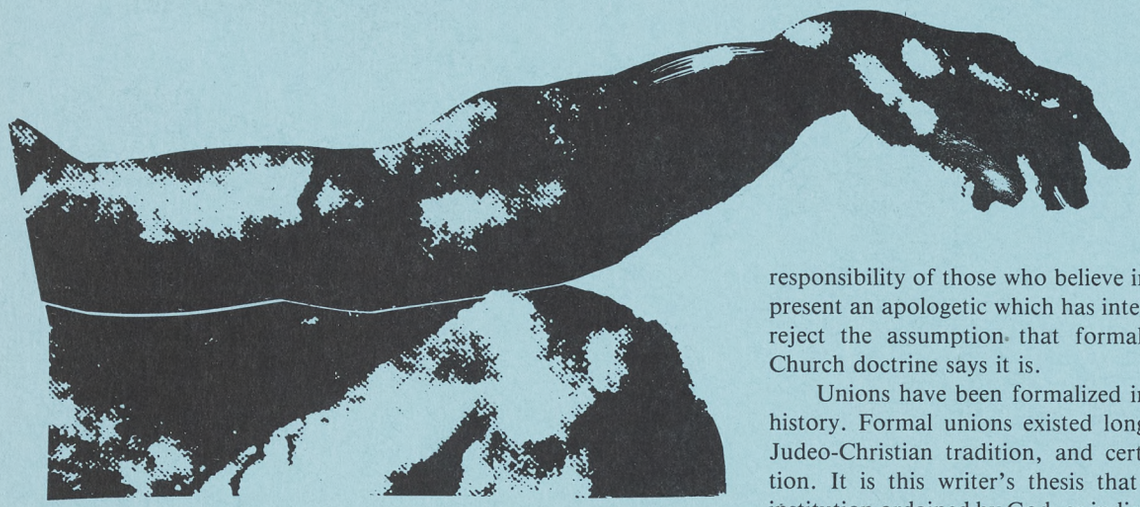
A Theology & MARRIAGE

MICHAEL



MANY PEOPLE HAVE relatively clear ideas of the reasons for Holy Union or Holy Matrimony. These reasons usually fall into two categories: those having to do with religious sanction and those having to do with legal sanction. People commonly acknowledge the fact that the Christian Church demands such formalization to legitimize a primary relationship, to invoke God's blessing, and to bind a couple in permanent commitment. In the case of marriage, though not yet of Holy Union, people also see the facts that marriage legitimizes a relationship in eyes of the community, gives formal identity and approval to children produced in the relationship, and provides financial and social benefits.

With increasing frequency, couples find themselvs dissatisfied with these reasons. Heterosexual couples find lessening justification for the presence of legal restrictions and encumbrances upon relationships which have been established and have flourished without them. Homosexual couples, while they may resent the injustice of benefits which are unavailable to them, are not presently faced with the prospect of legal significance for their relationships.

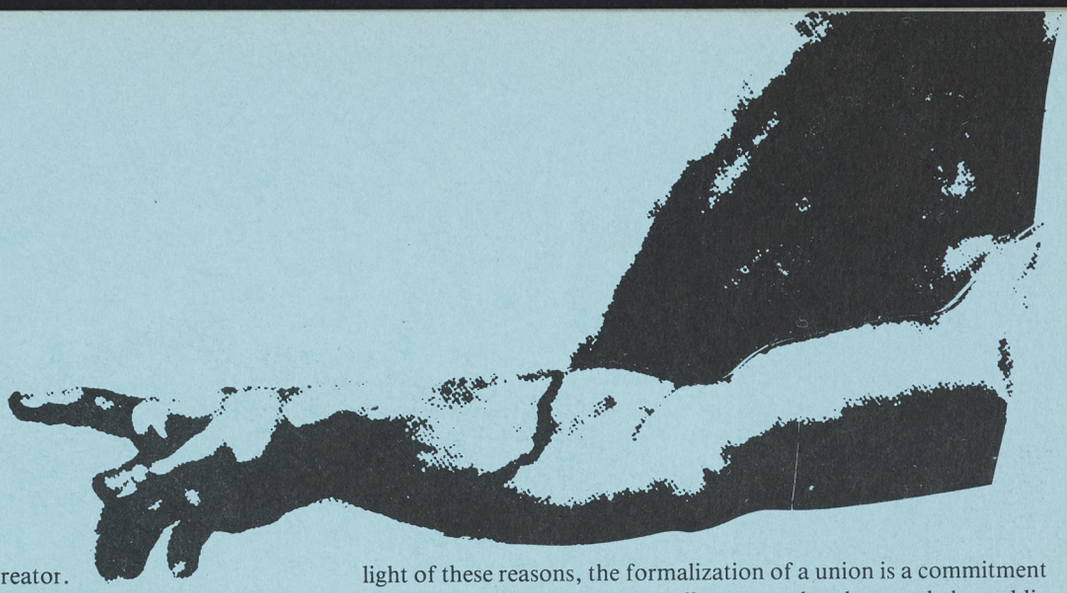
More startling to many in the Christian Church, perhaps, is the increasing number of couples who reject the Church's right either to sanction or to disapprove of their relationships. They see no sacramnental significance in formal union and, therefore, view the Church's demand for it as a continuing effort to bind individuals to itself through oppression by guilt and fear. Some point out that they are capable of turning to God themselves and of committing their relationship to God without the authority of a religious institution. Nonreligious couples reject all need for Church sanction out of hand.

Under these conditions, society encompasses an increasing number of couples who establish relationships which grow to permanence but are never formalized. The couple may question the institution of formal union, find no pressing reason for embracing it, and reject it as an option. (In this article, the rites of Holy Union and Holy Matrimony are included in the term "formal union." The reasons for the institutions explored here are the same for any relationship without sexual distinction.)

Those who support the sacramental value of formal union see special dangers, or at least serious deprivation, in such rejection of the institution. Since it is they who identify a problem, it is the responsibility of those who believe in a sacramental significance to present an apologetic which has integrity in the eyes of people who reject the assumption that formal union is necessary because Church doctrine says it is.

Unions have been formalized in cultures throughout most of history. Formal unions existed long before the beginning of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and certainly before modern civilization. It is this writer's thesis that formal union is, indeed, an institution ordained by God, as indicated in the Genesis accounts of creation and as incorporated in currently traditional ceremonies of union. Formal union must not be misconstrued, however as being necessary simply *because* God ordained it, as if it were an arbitrary order. Reasons are often apparent even to finite minds for God's created order, and such reasons are apparent for formal union. Therefore, it seems that formal union was ordained by God because it produces good.

Human beings are created with the capacity and the need for society, with the exception of occasional individuals who withdraw from society. Most human beings need companionship, a pool of resources which is provided by the combination of indivudual capabilities, and aunified strength and support to meet the demands of life. By the nature of humanity as created by God, then, society may be seen as ordained by God. This reality is perceived by experience over the span of history, based on the



# of HOLY UNION in Society

assumption, of course, of God as Creator.

Proceeding from that assumption and from the deduction that society is divinely ordained, the next step is to reiterate that formal union occurs throughout human society. It appears as a need in society and so the need is met by formalization. We may deduce that this need, springing naturally and creatively from society, is a part of the divine ordination of human need.

It is this need for formal union, a basic expression of human nature in society, which seems to be the reason for such union, a reason which precedes and predates any legal or doctrinal reason.

Soceity strives to attain stability. It needs the creativity and contribution of resources which individuals who compose it provide. People who build strong, stable and creative personal relationship for themselves are often those who function best as stable and contributing members of human society. Ideally, the commitment of indivuduals in a primary relationship, then, provides this kind of support to soceity. Conversely, society can act as a support to the stability and growth of a relationship between individuals. Society provides a matrix of assets which it gives to people struggling to build a life together.

These are two reasons which seem most basic to formal union: stable relationships provide stability in society, and the support of society enhances relationships. (These are, obviously, ideals and are examined in a purer state than that which commonly exists.) In light of these reasons, the formalization of a union is a commitment of individuals to society as well as to each other, and the public request for the support of society in the persons of their witnesses. The Church and society have historically seen these as worthy reasons. Each has, however, tended to obscure such basic reasoning by bounding this valuable institution of union with limits and restrictions and safeguards designed to protect and enhance it. These bounds have often become ends in themselves. Conformity to the forms has become the primary value, often concealing the value of the basic needs which are divinely infused in society.

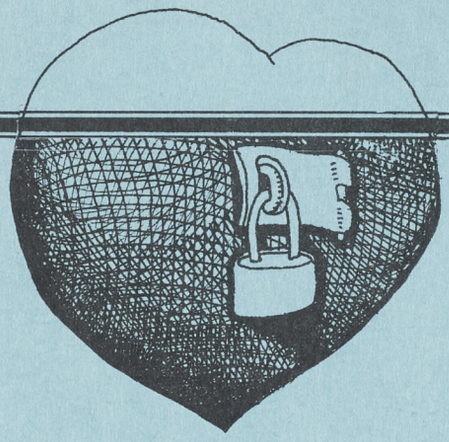
Christian living is, of course, completely compatible with divine order and the process of creation. These reasons for formal union, therefore, may be expected to be compatible with Christian living and do, in fact, prove to be so. A nonreligious couple may well enter into formal union for these social reasons without acknowledging the theological underpinnings. It is quite possible to see that both society and individuals benefit from formal union, without assuming that this situation is divinely ordained. Those who subscribe to the assumption in faith that God is Creator do see this as God's redemptive presence in society. In the steps of Christ we may build upon the simply socil reasons for union by seeing the potential in union for contributing to society because we care about others and the potential for soliciting that care in return. It becomes the positive redemptive potential which is the nature of God in Christ. And in the sustaining support found in formal union we experience the Holy Spirit of God.

There is no denial of God in acknowledging formal union as a social instrument. Therefore, to both religious and nonreligious, formal union is often desirable as a contribution of stability and growth to society and a contribution of support and stimulation from society. The simply social explanation for the Christian, however, automatically includes God because God is accepted as the Creator of society. Therefore, the Christian moves further theologically to realize that formal union can be a redemptive act through Christ of human beings caring for one another, and it is an experience of the sustaining Holy Spirit in holding us close to God and to one another in the fulfilled order of continuing creation.

ENGLAND

ROMANCE and domestic sex

Edward T. Hougen



WHEN I WAS FOURTEEN, I had my first experience with a roller coaster. It was at the State Fair in Milwaukee. The car climbed to the top of a high hill of track and sped down. My body was overwhelmed with the most exhilarating and ecstatic sensations. When the ride ended, I had to repeat it; nothing at that moment seemed more urgent. I continued to ride the roller coaster the next twelve trips in a row. The transporting experience eventually began to diminish with the succeeding trips so that by the end of the thirteenth ride, I was ready to get off and go about my business.

In the years that have followed, when I find myself in an amusement park I again ride the roller coaster (if the line is not too long). The original enthrallment has never quite recurred; yet even today, riding a roller coaster is for me an intense experience.

The intensity of an experience, however, is not a very accurate measure of its substance or significance. Most people who have ridden roller coasters will testify to the fact that during the ride it is difficult if not impossible to turn one's attention to anything else; notwithstanding, the ride itself has relatively little importance to or connection with the ongoing issues and substance of the rider's existence. When the ride is over, one returns to oneself and picks up the thread of one's life.

Throughout this discussion I hope the reader will keep in mind the lesson of the roller coaster; intensity of feeling is not equal to importance of feeling. For as we turn our attention to romance, we will be considering one of the most intense of all human responses which by virtue of that very fact has laid claim to being among the most significant of human experiences.

It is unlikely that anyone reading this has not been seized at some time, if not at most times in his or her life, by romantic feelings. He or she may not have identified the feelings as such, however, since romance masquerades as something of a very different sort, something of real substance, that is, romance usually masquerades as love.

A romantic involvement or attachment is in many ways like the roller coaster experience. It takes the person over, becoming for him or her the most important if not the sole reality of the moment. It is often unrelated to or unconnected with the substance of the person's life. It is often ecstatic and exhilarating, and always the source of intense feelings. Unlike the roller coaster ride, it is not usually seen as a relatively frivolous diversion, but as an experience of tremendous weight and authority. It is romantic experience that is referred to by the terms falling or being in love. It is supposedly the thing that makes the world go round. It is seen as the essential basis for any permanently intimate or life-committed relationship, so that it is almost unthinkable to marry someone with whom one is not "in love." Indeed, the person one marries should be, according to popular thinking, the one with whom one is most "in love."

Romance, being "in love," is characterized by obsessive interest in the beloved, so that the mere mention of his name, passing by her house, observing him or her walk into a room brings about a rush, a quickening of the blood. It is, to be sure, a dramatic and thrilling business with which life's other claims often have trouble competing.

There is nothing, of course, wrong with romance *per se*. Indeed, it is one of the most popular and sought after of all human experiences. Where it begins to exert a destructive influence is where it is seen as something more than it is; when it lays claim not only to being a form of love (which it may be) but the most important form of love (which it is not). When that happens, people start to do very unfunny things with their lives around this feeling. It is one of the purposes of this article to distinguish between romance and love so that romance might be a source of enjoyment rather than tyranny.

Probably the most striking contrast between romance and love is the impact of time upon each. Time is the enemy of romance since the idealization of the lover necessary for the romantic state to be sustained is possible only so long as the lover is not clearly seen as he or she really

is. The elapse of time almost inevitably brings about more and more exposure to the romantic object and thus lays the seeds for the dissolution of romance. This explains why long term romances are rare, except when the romantic object remains at a distance, unattainable. In other words, it is possible to support a romantic attachment over a period of years only if one does not actually get close to its object. To the extent one becomes intimate with the romantic choice, the romantic attachment diminishes.

Love, contrary to romance, is strengthened and increased over a period of time. For love is directed towards the person as he or she really is; the better the person is known, the more clearly he or she is seen, the greater the possibility for love. Love is a kind of relationship rather than a feeling, a stance and commitment that includes the possibility of a variety of emotions, such as anger, disgust, worry as well as excitement, joy, serenity. People who love each other are able to relate to one another in terms of a full range of human emotions and responses and not only, as in romance, in terms of either adoration or hurt.

One of the cruelest and most persistent fallacies in our culture is the linkage between romance and love. People almost universally seek a marriage or domestic partner through romance or falling in love. Their assumption is that romance must be the central ingredient in the marriage relationship. Their belief is that it will be sustained in its original form throughout their lifetime. When the romantic intensity fades, after a relatively short period, the couple is faced with the reality of one another. They may discover that without the former degree of romantic excitement they have very little that they enjoy in each other.

Couples are encouraged to measure the vitality of their marriage or domestic arrangement by the degree to which the romantic attachment is sustained. This often gives rise to an amazing array of pretenses and self-deception. For as proof of their love the couple must in a variety of ways reassure each other of their continued romantic interest. The primary requirement, of course, is to claim exclusive sexual interest in one's marriage partner. The romantic illusion is threatened by the reality of sexual interest in a variety of persons. Romance requires a kind of intense exclusivity. It allows the "loved" one to have no other significant interests or relationships. Romance, in short, requires extreme jealousy and possessiveness; the greater the intensity of romantic feeling, the greater the possessive and jealous responses toward the partner. Love, on the other hand, is quite open to and accepting of the beloved as a real rather than an ideal person. Thus jealousy and possessiveness are antithetical to love. It is therefore somewhat ironic that if one does not insist upon affectional or sexual exclusivity in one's domestic relationship, it is widely interpreted as a sign that one does not love his or her partner sufficiently.

Romance, being the all-important measure of the quality of a relationship, has given rise to much advice on how to keep it alive in one's marriage. Most of the books and articles written on the subject explain, in effect, how to hide yourself from your partner by striking one or another hopefully attractive pose. There is probably nothing particularly harmful in following such advice from time to time so long as it does not occupy a central place in the domestic relationship. For what domesticity offers is the opportunity for real intimacy. To sacrifice that in order to hang onto romance is equivalent to keeping the brightly covered wrapping on a gift and ignoring the gift itself.

Romantic sex contrasts markedly with domestic sex. To begin with, romance is at its very center a preoccupation with sexuality, whereas domesticity is a relationship in which sex is but one (and not even the most important) factor. The energy behind the romantic feeling is sexual. It is, however, not actual sexual expression, but sexual longing that generates romance. Thus, when the longed for experience with one's romantic object is attained, and the sexual goal is realized, the romance is destroyed, since longong for that person is no longer possible. The old caveat about not sleeping with your partner prior to marriage makes good sense when romance is the most important currency in a relationship. For one is quite apt to lose interest (that is romantic interest) in a partner who is too accessible sexually. Indeed, the cultural instruction to women to be somewhat withholding of sexual "favors" even after marriage is, I suspect, anchored in the subliminal awareness that scarcity increases longing, and is thus a misguided effort to prolong romance.

Whereas sex in the romantic setting is quite special, sex in the domestic setting is a rather ordinary and familiar activity that serves a variety of important needs. The most significant function is to provide a relatively enjoyable and accessible outlet, in the context of an affectionate and secure relationship, for the sexual drive so that folks are not running around chronically horny, unable to concentrate on such mundane but necessary tasks as mowing the lawn, cooking dinner, getting to work. Yet almost as important as relieving tension, is the contrasting function of creating a little. If things are getting a bit dull or stale, with minimal imagnation, one can liven things up a bit by going to bed. Sex quite literally keeps juice flowing in the relationship. Furthermore, the freedom that comes from really knowing your partner and being secure with him or her allows for realizing a physically satisfying sexual relationship. Unlike in the romantic context, acknowledgement of some of the mechanics of sex does not endanger the domestic experience.

Thus far it may appear that I have been rather harsh on romance. But it is not my purpose to discourage folks from romantic experiences. Such an enterprise would be futile even if I wished to undertake it, which I don't. Romance, aside from the immense pleasure it afford people, can have some beneficial side effects as well: It moves people out of what may have become a dull routine. The person "in love" is usually open to experiencing new things, particularly those things connected with the romantic object. A romantic attachment adds pizazz to life. Best of all, romance may lead to love. For a romantic attachment inevitably gives rise to a desire for intimacy. In getting to know one's lover, though one sacrifices the romance, one may be replacing it with a substantive relationship, and that actually is what makes the world go round.

The problems arise when one loses perspective on romance and sees it as central rather than peripherial in establishing long term relationships. For though one can have both a romantic relationship and a domestic relationship at the same time, one cannot have such a relationship with the same person at the same time.

Marriage and romance have both suffered because of our mistaken linkage

of the two. One might even go so far as to say one should never marry someone while he or she is "in love" with that person. The very fact of being "in love" is testimony to the fact that one is not really seeing clearly the person with whom he or she is proposing to share life.

By helping people to distinguish between love and romance, we make possible the responsible enjoyment of and participation in both. But so long as we continue to operate out of a romantic framework with its illusion, jealousy, and possessiveness as our base rather than a framework of love with its care, openness, and trust as our base, we usually make possible the enjoyment of neither. Romance claiming love's authority is a tyrant. Romance under love's watchful eye can be a delight.

in memoriam:

A TIME OF DECISION

Gil Lincoln is pastor of MCC/New York. The following is excerpted from his message at the May 29 memorial service for the victims of the Everard fire.

It well may be that a people is not truly a people until they have a Memorial Day of their own, by whatever name. Without a community memory of movements of high cathartic tragedy, of convulsing grief, and of the most resolute determination to win through desprite all costs and odds, a people is not yet fully and truly a people with common history and a common mind. But that said, I must say this to you as well: it is precisely in the moment when commemoration becomes merely a matter of speeches and sentiment that a people begins to disintegrate, to be atomised once more into a social dust.

We are come together in a critical hour, an hour when we shall either seize the hot iron and forge our own destiny or be marked and scarred with the victim's brand. And we are at that critical moment when we come to a common mind—or we may never do so!—and shape our commemoration into a whole new framework of will and endeavor.

We shall rise a new people with a new cohesiveness and anew will to wrest our liberty and dignity and destiny from the world. Or we shall slink away mindful only of our pain, as of a wound in heart and spirit which will never heal. You and I will emerge from the searing agony of these days with new resolution and new strength and a new relentless claim upon the world. Or else we shall in effect give ourselves over in futility to a pyre of self-mistrust, self-loathing, and a self-damnation which only our oppressors will applaud.

Our community—our friends—have suffered a nameless, meaningless horror. There is no redemption in it. Their suffering and their death has purchased no good for themselves or for us or for anyone. But it is in our hand, in yours and mine, to confer meaning on that tragedy, to invest it with dignity and nobility by the memorial in the way we live and strive henceforth.

So I put it to you: it is for us, the living, to rise up as one body, to speak out in one implacable voice a single demand. We will never again tolerate selective law enforcement by government officials, who harrass us with anti-sodomy laws but refuse to enforce the building codes where we gather. We will never again tolerate those vile traders in human flesh who demand high prices for demeaning squalor in the facilities we use. We will not tolerate any longer a mayor who prattles inane foolishness while the mortuary vans go by. We will not hear of any more self-serving and self-exonerating investigations by a district attorney who has no intention of delivering justice to us but only thinks to distract the public with grotesque details of private conduct luridly described.

No! But we will care for our own. We will give our dead honorable burial. We will care for our injured and guarantee them rehabilitation. We will say to those whom we patronize and provide with profit that they must deliver the goods we pay for. We will go to the city council and we will come away with an ordinance making unlawful the prejudice that deprives us of jobs and decent housing. We will make plain to the media that when they tell our story they must tell the whole truth, not the piers and Times Square aspects only but the solid achievement and rich hope of our lives. And we shall say to our neighbors and our families and our co-workers that if they like us or not, fear us or not, they are going to treat us with respect and dignity and openness as they themselves wish to be treated.

We are going to present for payment, and for payment now, the promissory note written in the American Constitution and in the sense of decency and justice in every upright heart.

We are a people now, a people come of age since Stonewall. We claim now our own Memorial Day. And in our lives, our determination, our deeds and our very flesh we shall generate a living memorial of justice and liberty and dignity in recompense and tribute to the last of our martyrs. For there will be no more martyrs: the next dead and injured they take from our number they will have to fight for. And it will cost them more dearly than they think.

Carter Heyward
The Pearl of Great Price

Reflections on Lesbianism and the Christian Church

A paraphrase of Matthew 13:45-46: "Going with God is like unto a woman seeking goodly pearls; and, having found one pearl of great price, she went and sold all that she had, and bought it." The parable of the pearl of great price: a woman seeking pearls — pearls — something in which to invest herself, connectedness between self and other that is meaningful, something good; and having found one pearl of great price — something extraordinary in which to invest herself, a connectedness or relatedness of uncommon meaning, something more than "good," something unspeakably fine, she went and sold all that she had, and bought it. She sells all — all other pearls, other connections, relationships, dependencies, and buys the pearl of great price. She divests herself of all else, and invests herself wholly in that one special pearl, that one extraordinary relationship of uncommon meaning. Such is it like, going with God, who sells the pearl, who is in the pearl, who is the pearl.

I have come here tonight to speak to you on Lesbianism, specifically on the situation of Lesbians, homosexual or "gay" women, in the Church. An issue, an experience, an existential process of being and becoming among women who are going with God and who, in so doing, are participating, knowingly or unknowingly, in the shaking of the foundations of The Christian Church: its theology, its ethics, its liturgies and polities, its structures. I see through a glass darkly that Church foundations are being shaken so passionately, furiously, and unrelentlessly by the issue of "sexuality" by those of us who care that we who care will, within the next few decades, find either that we have given in to ecclesiastical anguish and made peace with an institution whose ways are not ours; or that we have departed the ecclesiastical institutions rather than sell the pearl of great price; or that the Church itself — through words and action — will have been, and will still be, in a process of a radical divesting of itself from ancient theological, ethical and political "norms" in order to invest itself in the on-going, creative being with God, who is Godself the source, the giver, the essence of all that we name as "sexual."

I know myself to be a person, like all persons, essentially defiant of categories. I remember myself as a child, who like all children, lived with a wisdom — Sophia — with an imaginary playmate, in fact, named "Sophie Couch" — whom I outgrew. My experiences, buoyed by my imagination, knew few categories or lines of clear demarcation between "who I was" and "who I was not," or between the values of being a human, an animal, or a plant as member of God's creation. I was not bound early, or easily, by such categories as "White" and "Black," "child" and "adult," "male" and "female," let alone by such enigmatic and arbitrary concepts as "masculine" and "feminine." Only later, much later, was I to learn and inwardly digest the teaching that such boundaries and categories are crucial to one's sense of self and identity; that in order to be my healthy, and holy, self I must be clear on who and what I am, category by category, and I most certainly must be clear on my own being as distinct from yours and must be clear that I am distinct and separate from those whose categories I do not share. Such clarity manifests itself in the strong ego, the stable personality, the normal individual — and any lack of such clarity manifests itself in the disintegrated, pathological, and/or abnormal self. And the categories were abundant, and my clarity was keen: I was Christian, white, refined, good, smart, talented, female, and, with God's help, very, very "feminine." My wise little friend, Sophie Couch, had long since departed with my imagination, and there I was, age 13, within a stone's throw of becoming the All American Girl, cheerleader, class president, debutante, Who's Who, Dean's List, church leader, Girl Friday to the clergy, and someday, the wife of a priest and the mother of his sons.

Many secret-crushes-on-strong-women-and-men later, people in whom I yearned for reunion with Sophie Couch; many offices, honors, and awards later; many pastors, counselors, and therapists later; several proposals for marriage later; many years of clarity and confusion, thrills and heartbreak, moments, days, weeks, and months of running fast toward some goal and even faster away from it; 10, 12, years of searching for goodly pearls, some sense of connectedness, relationship, that made sense to me and of me, I found tucked fast away deep within me, waiting for me to rediscover, my soul; and therein, my Sophie Couch soaring imaginatively through my being, towards all that has been, all that is, all that will ever be, within me, beyond me, around me, an awareness of my own relationship to all members of creation. The essential me, both unique in all the world and involved, organically, essentially, and inextricably in the living and dying of all persons and creatures, I found myself. My soul. My being in relationship to One — God — who holds and moves us all, together. The pearl of great price. The relationship to God, and all, that is at once that which we call "spiritual" and that which we call "sexual." And there was no way, and there *is* no way, for me to know "sexuality," then, as that fundamental human yearning for meaningful relationship, without knowing that, to the extent that I am yearning for meaningful relationship with people who are women, I am yearning sexually for women. To the extent that I am open to, and yearning for relationship with God, or with people, or with other aspects of creation, I am alive and yearning sexually — period. For it is not just with my intellect, or with my emotions that I yearn, but with *myself* — every bone in my body, every nerve under my skin, every orifice in my being, everything that I am — that I reach out, and take in, and give out, and hold onto, and let go, and move with, whether in bed with a lover, on my knees in prayer, in class with students, at the altar in Communion, or romping in the yard with my dog. And so, that is me, one in whose life, categories merge: spirituality and sexuality are one; homo- and heterosexuality are one; and that which

Carter Heyward is one of eleven women ordained in the Episcopal priesthood in 1974. This speech, given at Andover Newton Seminary earlier this year, first appeared in The Mother Eagle Review in abbreviated form. *Text Copyright © 1977 by Carter Heyward.*

we name "divine" is also that which we name as "human" when I, or any person, reaches out for meaningful relationship. It seems to me that we are indeed talking about Incarnation and Atonement, God with-us, yearning to be born again, and again, and again, in relationship within, between, and among us.

Christian tradition has, in no small way, undercut our capacity for yearning. For yearning implies some unknown One for whom we yearn, an almost unintelligible quest for meaningful relationship; and Christian thought — hence the Church itself — has, from its early days attempted to locate, define, and map out the way to, God. Hence, the on-going war that the Church has waged against various heresies, agnosticism, practices, and even questions of Yahweh, our God and Father: God is *not* darkness, God is light. God is *not* death, God is life. God is *not* irrational, God is rational. God is *not* Mother, God is Father. God is *not* of the flesh, God is of the Spirit. God is *not* sexual. God is spiritual.

In each and every case, *"God" is in,* whatever those who have done the defining in a partriarchal religion/culture perceive to be, essentially, that which is *in control of* some other. Hence, God, in light, overcomes darkness; God, in life, conquers death. God, rational Logos, brings order to chaos and irrationality. God, in Spirit, is stronger than the flesh. God the Father penetrates and uses, at his will, the mother — earth — female recipient of the Father's initiative. And spirituality becomes the strongest weapon at our disposal against death, darkness, chaos, woman — and sexuality, all of which have been defined, implicitly and explicitly, throughout the history of the Church as "evil" — those powers that contravene, and must be subdued, by that which is "Good" — God. I would suggest that the institutional Church's collective fear of, terror at, sexuality — a fear that we ourselves have been immersed in, and perhaps still are — is hardly less great than our fear of death, the final and absolute phenomenon which is beyond our control.

I offer these observations by way of suggesting that ecclesiastical anxieties about sexuality are formidable, and that we who ask that church polity and theology be re-formed toward celebration of women and of sexuality are, in fact, requesting, or demanding, that an entire cosmic consciousness be raised and opened to its own revolution. It is no wonder that at least 50,000 women were burned as witches between 13 and 1800, usually for sexual offenses. It should have been expected that the UCC would go into institutional convulsions over the ordination of Bill Johnson, and that the Bishop of New York would be subjected to greater abuse after his ordination of Ellen Barrett than he received either about controversial civil rights advocacy or as he ran through the streets of Saigon. It is much *more* amazing that you and I would believe that we can help bring significant, creative change in the institutional attitude and action towards homosexuality. But here we are, believing either that we *can* do something, or that something must be done by someone, or at least wondering what is happening and what we think of it. And I would only say clearly before moving into the situation of Lesbians in the Church today, that we who *do* believe that change can happen and that *we* must participate in it *will suffer* much and long, whether we call ourselves "gay" or "straight" or "bisexual," whether we are single or married, older or younger. Hence, our commitment and efforts depend solely on how much we value the pearl of great price.

The most deeply rooted and perhaps significant cultural revolution in this country at this time is women's liberation, out of which nas spun "feminism," or the ideological position that women's equality to man is a matter not simply of raising women's pay, providing women with child care centers, ordaining women, or addressing women as "Ms.", but is moreover a matter of collective commitment and work toward the transformation of all cultural assumptions about the inherent, or "God-given," nature of women, nature of men, and the concommitant assumptions about sex-roles, sex, and relationships, both between the sexes and among members of the same sex.

Hence, it should come as no surprise that with feminist impact, significant number of men and women (including many who are not, or would not claim to be, "feminists") are more open now than a decade ago not only to intimate relationships with members of the same sex and to the possibilities of expressing this intimacy in physical and genital ways, but also to acknowledging both to self and others that this is so — and that it is good. In terms of consciousness, there is a vast expanse betwen the forms of reflection on homosexuality manifest in such films as "The Fox" and "The Boys in the Band" (in which homosexuality is dealt with sensitively, and poignantly, as a rather pathetic grasping after straws) — films of the last decade — and public celebrations of homosexuality manifest now in such slogans as "Gay is good," and "Gay and proud," and increasingly in art as it flows out of feminist music, poetry, paintings, and prose.

In recent weeks I have had occasion to discuss homosexuality with several gay men, and have learned how little I know or understand about gay men and the experiences of male homosexuals. I will not attempt to talk specifically about gay men. I will not attempt, for I could not do so justly, to make comparisons between the situations in which gay men and gay women find ourselves. I believe the commonality to be deeper and stronger than the differnces. For I believe that while the differences between the experiences of gay men and gay women are derivative of the different sex-roles and expectations in which women and men have been steeped, the commonality gay women and gay men share is that all of us are yearning for meaningful relationship in a society in which we are absolutely forbidden to seek and find such relationship with members of our own sex. The situation that gay women and gay men share is difficult enough outside the boundaries of institutional religion. Witness the Anita Bryant campaign in Miami; the fight and plight of Sgt. Matlovich; of Lesbian mothers; and of gay men interrogated and jailed by Grand Juries. Within the church itself, the situation is made *more* difficult, for not only do we contend with the norms of "civil religion" as these standards of sexual morality are strong and effective both within and without the church, but moreover, the *entirety* of the Church's theology and structure is held fast and firm by the ancient proscription against sex-outside-of-*marriage* as destructive, evil, and sin against God. Then too, church law is rooted much more deeply than civil law in its ban against adventuring into the unknown, the uncontrollable. And so, while in the secular arena of our corporate life, women and homosexuals — though far from liberation — do increasingly have civil law on our side, step by step, the sacred arena of corporate life — institutional churches — are likely to fight to the death attempts at significant advocacy of women and homosexuals and are bound to try strangling, with canon law, every effort of women and gays toward active, lively, and celebrative expressions of who we are.

I will go so far as to suggest that while the churches have led at times, and still do at times lead the way, toward justice in society as a whole, the Church as a whole, vis a vis its institutional leadership, will be the last to venture into a celebration of sexuality as good and right. So strong is the historic and theological mandate against sexuality . . . and against women, perceived in pre-consciousness as the bearer of sexuality to man.

Lesbians, unlike gay men, thus bear the burden not only of being homosexual in a church in which sexuality is held to be evil, sex outside of marriage indefensible, and homosexuality itself perverse; but moreover of being female in a church in which woman has long borne the psychic/theological/and symbolic burden of being that which is — by definition — chaotic, irrational, mysterious, unknown, uncontrollable, deadly, sexual. Make no mistake about it: Ellen Barrett is carrying the burden of sexuality for many gay men who are able to sit back and cheer quietly as *she* is engulfed by a rage and a terror that priests and bishops throughout the Episcopal Church have spent their lives eluding in the corners of closets.

In every happy Lesbian, the church is encountered by a woman who has said no, in some way, to the traditional marriage; yes, to her own body and to sexuality itself; and yes to that which has been traditionally defined as chaotic, irrational, mysterious, unknown, uncontrollable — yes to *women*.

Hence, Lesbianism is for Christian-consciousness-untransformed an implicit and bold "NO" to the God that is contained within the categories of light, logos, and Father. The unrepentant Lesbian, by her very being — proud and gay — is a sign of new religion, new consciousness, new faith, in which there is no patriarchal authority and no space for male definition of who or what woman is, should be, or will be.

This much we should remember — whether or *not* we who are Lesbian *intend* to signify such transformation; whether or not we *want* to signify such change. The fact of the matter is that regardless of how orthodox her very being, if she is happy and bold about herself, it is a threat to the undoing of the Christian Church as we know it. Ellen Barrett is a mild-mannered, orthodox Anglo-Catholic, whose intention has never been to revolutionize the faith and practice of the Episcopal Church. Yet, as Lesbian, Ellen Barrett is seen — and rightly so, I must say — to be wielding a sword toward the throat of the traditional faith and practice of the Christian Church.

We should not take lightly the ramifications of who we are, but rather must live into these ramifications, both for the sake of our own souls and for the sake of the Christian Church, if we are indeed — wittingly or unwittingly — about its own/our own thoroughgoing transformation from male, heterosexual, anti-sexual space to that space which is simultaneously human and divine, spiritual and sexual. What might our tasks be?

(1) *To cultivate ourselves as people open to, and growing within, a yearning for meaningful relationship* — relationship with God, and with one another, female and female, female and male, male and male, relationship of mutual respect, freedom, and love for the very process of the yearning that takes us always into unknown spaces, within, between, and among ourselves. It is not easy to live with such integrity, but I believe it is impossible to live without it.

(2) *To express thoughtfully and boldly this experience* in our theology, our liturgy, and certainly in our lives as ministers, teachers, pastors, counselors, friends, lovers, not accepting the concept of closed or rigid Christian tradition as viable for open, growing people. I can only speak for myself when I say that it is precisely because I do *not* believe the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to be categorically contained within a closed system of symbols and thought that I remain with, and in, the institutional Church. I am finding the most radical position to be within the Church, for only within can I search for the roots and dig for them within the tradition itself, emerging with ever-opening vision as to what we are really meant to be about as people of God.

(3) *To stand defiant of all external, and most internal, attempts at categorizing ourselves* — except insofar as we must state again and again, as our sisters and brothers are harassed and punished, deprived and humiliated, because either they or others call them "gay," that *we too are gay*. Insofar as we have any idea of what it means to love people because they are people, *we are gay*. Insofar as we refuse to accept clinical and ecclesiastical definitions of "normality" and "righteousness" in sexual relationships, *we are gay*.

Insofar as I am open to the possibility of reaching out and touching deeply the life and being of a sister, *I am a Lesbian — and I am good* — and in that one, single affirmation the Christian Church's groan can be heard echoing back 2000 years. And it must be said again, and again, and again, that it is good, and not simply the feelings or the emotions or the caring, but also the activity, the bodies, the love-making that may ensue; the passion — the whole of who we are — is good in that yearning for relationship, in which there is no dualism between the body and the soul, the flesh and the spirit, the desire and the activity, the doer and the deed.

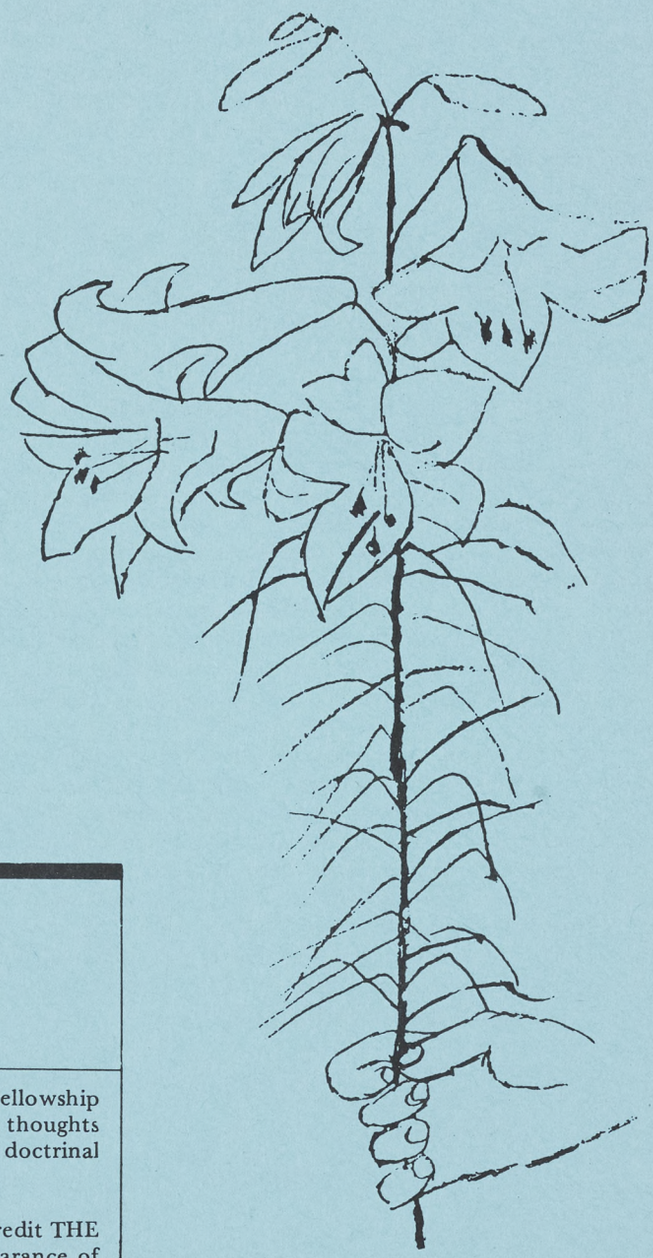
(4) *To work hard, together and alone, for justice for women and homosexuals in and beyond the Church.* This will mean education; caucusing, taking risks, losing face — and maybe jobs, and receiving pleas for caution in our activities, usually in the guise of political expediency, such as being told that what we're doing or saying is "counterproductive" — the favorite charge, I have learned, from liberal churchmen.

(5) *To be on guard against the wiles, however unintentional, of people who say they are "liberal"* — which is most of us much of the time — and who, therefore, must study the issue some more before taking action; or who want to get a clear concensus of the faithful before making an unequivocal statement; or who have other issues that "take priority" over sexuality, which after all is a "concern of only a minority of people." No battle in the church on the issue of sexuality will be won without "the liberal," but few "liberals" will take a firm and just stand on this or any other ethical issue until and unless "radicals" among us have made the issue unavoidable by making it present and pressing and more trouble to overlook than not to overlook. Specifically, those whom I call "radical" on "sexuality" will make clear and visible the fact that sexuality is good, by boldness, visibility, and articulateness of who we ourselves are as we yearn for relationship, and as we find it, of expressing t, in our theologies, in our liturgies, our teachings, our questions.

(6) *To struggle against the acting-out of the old sex-role norms in our relationships with same and other sex,* in order to diffuse, in our own lives — for our sake and for others' sake — the uses of power and control to avoid intimacy and to master the unknown. Each time we are captivated in a power-laden struggle for domination and control, or for submission and being controlled, whether in bed or in church, we short-circuit the yearning for relationship into which we flow,a nd we instead participate in the on-going building of a world order, and ecclesiastical order, and personal relationships founded upon an inability to appreciate the mystery and the process of becoming at-one with God and creation itself. In doing so we further cement the concepts and reality of domination, control, and categories — all to the demeaning of women and sexuality, of human life and of God.

(7) *To seek community with gay men* — to live into our commonness — but at the same time, *to refuse to allow ourselves to be used, again — and again — as the scapegoat for their sexuality*. We should not forget that we are just as vulnerable in the church as *women* as we are as *gay*. We can support our brothers but *we* cannot sell them the pearl of great price. Nor will they be able to buy it cheaply.

In closing, let me say that I have also discovered how much time I need alone — by myself — to pray, to walk, to think, to ponder these things in my heart. In continuing to discover the depths of my own yearning for meaningful relationship, I find that I am discovering the depths of my own autonomy. Perhaps the pearl of great price is a paradox: for in discovering my relational possibilities to others, I am discovering myself; and in discovering who I am and have been all along, I am discovering God-with-me, who has been there all along. Going home in the bosom of my God, my friends and lovers, myself, and creation itself, I find I am at home.



THE GAY CHRISTIAN

A journal of theological reflection from Metropolitan Community Church

THE GAY CHRISTIAN is the theological journal of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Individual articles reflect the thoughts and opinions of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the doctrinal position or official policy of the UFMCC.

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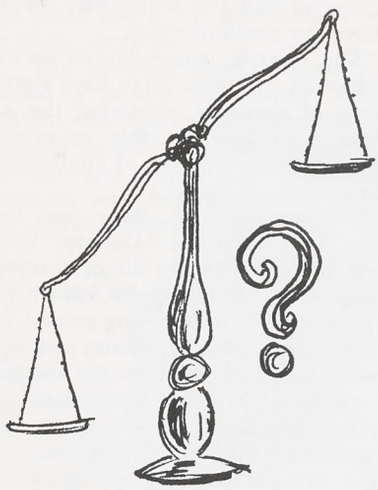
HUMAN RIGHTS OR HOMOPHOBIA?



What is homophobia?

Marcia Geyer, MCC New York Exhorter, in her new book on homophobia, defines it as "the prejudice against persons in so far as those persons' salient characteristics of identity are attributed to sexual and affectional preference for others of the same sex and the disposition to behave accordingly."

That's a definition.

Now here's an example.

In July, *Human Rights or Homophobia* was delivered to a California bindery. As a matter of policy this bindery has three shifts working around the clock. They customarily deliver any order within 24 or 48 hours.

Both *Human Rights or Homophobia?* by Ms Geyer and *Gay Lifestyles* by Norman Pittenger were delivered to this bindery more than two weeks before General Conference. After a week, we still weren't too worried, knowing their around-the clock capability.

As the time of Conference got closer and closer, we started placing daily phone calls to the bindery. Each day the answer was: maybe this afternoon — or tomorrow. Then I had to leave for General Conference and our dependable printer promised to send the books to Denver the minute they arrived from the bindery. I accepted that in view of the fact that we'd be in Denver more than a week.

I called back several times and the printer assured me the bindery was still promising daily delivery "this afternoon."

As everyone knows, it was to my utter chagrin that the books, highly publicized for sale at Denver, did not arrive in Denver in time — or at all.

When I got back to Los Angeles, the printer and I decided we'd been made fools of long enough. We decided to make the 100 mile trip to the bindery and find out "on location" what was happening. But first we decided to talk by phone with the owner, instead of the shop manager. It took a few days to get him off the golf course, but when we did, he was surprised and angered at his staff and promised immediate action.

It took two days to get in touch with him again and then he told the whole story. It had been sabatage from the very beginning. When the books first came in, one of the union shop workers started reading one of the books and spread the word throughout the shop that they were being asked to work on "homosexual pornography."

We broke in and explained that Dr. Pittenger is a world famous theologian and seminary professor with an international reputation as a scholar and man of God and that indeed neither his book nor that of minister-candidate Geyer were anything less than Christian books.

The owner said he'd try to influence his union shop. After another couple of days, he told us it was no use. They simply refused to work on these books and he was helpless.

Of course, as soon as we knew all these facts, we had the books delivered to another bindery and after a routine "broken equipment" delay, they were delivered. (And we had made sure there would be no problems with similar homophobia.)

We located an attorney who was eager to take on the case for no attorney fee and prepared to initiate a "business interuption" suit. First, a routine Dun and Bradstreet report. The story ends with the finding that the owner of the homophobic bindery had filed for bankruptcy.

What is homophobia? If you still don't know, read Marcia Geyer's book and remember it was a victim of homophobia.

(The next story is not exactly one of homophobia, but it might as well be told to make the record complete. IN UNITY was not ready yet, either, when I left for General Conference. The printer said he'd send it to arrive by Greyhound on Wednesday. Wednesday came and went. I called Los Angeles and the printer went back to Greyhound to complain that he had paid a premium fare to have the packages go out by the first bus. And then he looked across the room and there they were, still sitting there. He demanded his money back and sent them by air and they arrived on the last day of Conference.)

Just for the record.

Editorial: Continued from page 3

What I have to say has to do with ecclesiology. Now when God said, "Make a church for *all* my people," I don't think Rev. Perry rushed to the theology section of the Fuller or Moody library in order to do a big research on that particular branch of Christian theology, called ecclesiology which deals with the doctrine of the church.

That's my field. And I think Rev. Perry's ecclesiology is good. I think the Holy Spirit knows a lot about good ecclesiology and Troy knows how to listen to the Holy Spirit.

The crux of the ecclesiology I'm talking about is that the church does not exist for its own sake. THE CHURCH EXISTS FOR THE WORLD. "For God so loved the world that God gave God's only son . . . that the world might be saved through him."

Now anybody who has different ideas should study the life and teachings of Jesus — if they want to be Christian.

We are the church — those of us who claim to be Christian — and the church is not an end itself. We all know that our church choir is not an end itself. We know that the board of directors is not the church. But do we keep in mind that the church exists, not for itself, but to make God's love known to all people?

The church will be judged, or should I say, the church will be effective, not so much by what happens in the light of its stained glass windows or sparkling chandeliers (thank God those things are few and far between in MCC churches), as by its impact on society — the way the light of the Gospel shines through the people of the church.

What happens in the light of the stained glass windows and sparkling chandeliers is important — but fruitless in the long run if the light of the Gospel is not brought to bear upon the needs of the world. And this is the job of each and every Christian who would be worthy of the name. Every Christian is sent into the world — into the places where he or she goes to work or live — to exert a penetrating influence on his or her environment. This means in government, in business, in education, in science, in labor unions, in recreation areas, in our apartment buildings and dormitories, in our secular and religious organizations, and, under certain conditions on the steps of our Federal Buildings.

The only real hope is for Christians to have a penetrating Christian influence — by infiltration or by out and out open impact — on the decisions of society, not from the pulpits and pews, but out of the pulpits and pews and into the world. Troy Perry and Mary Tinkerless can do

Please turn to page 40

THE FELLOWSHIP FAMILY

NASHVILLE, TN

MCC Nashville came through a period of extensive publicity apparently with a victory or two. "With God, all things are possible," declared Pastor Tom Bigelow. "Never before have we had such an opportunity to show forth our boldness in the Lord and God's love for all people."

The editor of *Maranatha*, the newsletter of MCC Nashville, says, "Rev. Bigelow served as an articulate, eloquent, and believable spokesperson for homosexuals and gay rights supporters. Tom represented us with authority and dignity."

Because of all the publicity that came out of numerous newspaper articles, radio and television appearances, the Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church asked Edgehill Methodist Church to reconsider renting its facilities to "the Homosexuals." MCC has shared worship facilities with Edgehill for the last four years. (All other events and activities are held at Compton House, a large residence which is the center of daily activities for MCC Nashville and the community at large.) After reviewing the situation, the Edgehill congregation decided to continue to share their sanctuary with MCC for their weekly worship service.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Over the past 6 months, the Senior Citizens Program, supported by MCC-SF and the gay community, has provided over 1400 meals at luncheons held on the last Tuesday of each month, with an average of 85 seniors attending each luncheon. In addition, they fed over 500 seniors at a Town Meeting held in June at Gallileo High School. They also have sponsored excursions for seniors to Marine World USA and Great America (an amusement park), which were each enjoyed by 75-100 seniors.

MCC San Francisco is presently working with the City-sponsored VD Clinic to arrange a clinic to be held the last Thursday of each month at the church.

On September 25, 1977, MCC-SF instituted, as part of its outreach to the gay community, a free bus service to Sunday Evening Worship Services for the convenience of those who would like to attend. The bus follows a route including the majority of neighborhoods that are predominantly gay, and returns after services to these areas.

The MCC Northwest District Conference is going to be held in San Francisco on November 11, 12 and 13, and Rev. Jane Taylor is coordinating this event.

Rev. Bruce Hill has blessed over a dozen motorcycles on Folsom Street as part of the out-reach to the Western and Leather Community, South of Market Street in San Francisco.

Rev. Charles W. Larsen commences his third year as Gay Advisor to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission.

Both Pastor Larsen and Rev. Jane Taylor are on the Board of Directors of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual. Inc.

SOUTH ATLANTIC DISTRICT

In September and October, all the MCC's of the South Atlantic District began a study of Christian sexuality. The course was based on the Universal Fellowship book, *Christian Sexuality*, by Rev. Richard R. Mickley.

The course is being taught over a six week period in all the churches based on the study and discussion guide contained in the book. The course will officially culminate for all the churches of the district at the District Conference in Atlanta when the author, Rev. Mickley, will speak at the conference workshop on November 5.

The decision to launch the district-wide project came out of a district Christian education workshop held in Knoxville in July. More than 200 copies of the book were ordered by the churches and plans were formulated for one of the biggest district-wide educational programs ever carried out within the Universal Fellowship.

The District is composed of MCC Atlanta, MCC Augusta, MCC Greensboro, MCC Raleigh, MCC Columbia, MCC Knoxville, MCC Memphis, MCC Nashville. The Rev. Howard Wells, pastor of MCC Atlanta, is District Coordinator.

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, MN

We have a letter from Pastor Joan Johnson updating us on news from the Twin Cities.

"Our church building was vandalized several weeks ago. Since that time, we have been harrassed on a rather regular basis, with pickets marching outside of the church, and at one time interupting our worship services. But, Praise the Lord, we received excellent cooperation from the Mpls Police Dept. Last Wednesday they talked to the demonstrators, found an open bottle in their car, cited them. The police told us they did not feel we would have any more problems. The past Sunday and this Wednesday we did not have any demonstrators.

"The Friends, whose church we use, have backed us 100%. They have started a group of seminars, exploring the gay lifestyle, and look at this experience as learning a creative way of coping with harrassment.

"Another positive thing has happened. The Hennipen County Court System has invited us to do an in-service training class for the court system, on gay parents. We are involving several sets of same sex parents, foster parents, parents of gay children in the seminar. The children are also being involved. They feel they need to know more, with the greater influx of custody cases involving gay parents. We are really excited, because we feel this can be an important step in education.

"Next, we have been invited to do a worship service at Shakopee Women's Institution. Although I have been serving as a Chaplain there since last January, this will be the first time MCC will be involved in a worship service. They have a new chaplain, who is a woman, Rev. Marge Peterson. Marge and I have a good working relationship, and she is both understanding and compassionate.

"I just felt I had to share some of the plus's from the Twin Cities with the rest of the Fellowship."

Rev. Joan G. Johnson, Pastor
Metropolitan Community Church of
The Twin Cities

WICHITA, KS

In the future when MCC members around the world call Bank Travel Agency in Wichita, they will not be hearing the friendly voice of Rev. Arthur Ramirez. They will be referred to another agent who will be handling MCC accounts, or they will be referred to the MCC Wichita telephone number.

The man who made travel and hotel arrangements for so many hundreds of people who attended General Conference in Denver, the man who was at the same time District Coordinator of the Mid Central District of MCC, and at the same time pastor of MCC Wichita, and a full time travel agent, and the spouse of a (probably neglected) young man by the name of Greg, has been wooed away from Bank Travel to serve full time as Pastor of MCC Wichita by a congregation which seemingly was getting mighty jealous of his time spent in other works.

The congregation, which has made great strides in growth and financial stability during Rev. Ramirez' part time

pastorate could no longer cope with its jealousy of their pastor's "other job," and voted him a full time salary – which he gladly accepted.

The growing church recently purchased a $3400 new organ for their church and sports equipment for their outings, including a volley ball set, softball bats and balls, and a football. Ninety members and friends recently attended the church's birthday celebration.

MILWAUKEE, WI

Just a few months old, MCC Milwaukee shows signs of being a growing and stable church with the leadership of Rev. Chuck Schinlaub, Worship Coordinator. Their lengthy, newsy, and informative newsletter shows a vitality that presages a promising future.

The Edmonton Community of Gay Christians, which shows indications of being a beautiful Christian CHURCH (in the true sense of the word: people in community), a group not officially connected with MCC, has made a donation of $400 to MCC Milwaukee "that deeper bonds, both spiritual and actual, be established toward all congregations of the Universal Fellowship . . ."

The Edmonton Community of Gay Christians can be contacted at POB 2918 STN A, Edmonton, Alberta,Canada.

NORTHEAST DISTRICT

The Northeast District Conference was held at MCC Manhattan on October 2. Due to the now cumbersome size of the District, the Board of Home Missions and the lay delegates of the Conference voted to divide the District into two separate parts: the Northeast comprised of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, the northern half of New Jersey and Rhode Island; the Mid-Atlantic, comprised of District of Columbia, Maryland, the southern half of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Both Districts elected a new District Coordinator and Assistant as well as clerk and treasurer.

N.E.: Rev. Ed Hougen, Pastor MCC Boston, District Coordinator, Rev. Shelley Hamilton, Assistant Pastor MCC Manhattan, Asst. Coordinator. Mid-Atlantic: Rev. Frank Scott, Pastor MCC Pittsburg, District Coordinator. Rev. Stan Harris, Pastor MCC Baltimore, Asst. Coordinator.

Two new Study Groups were granted recognition; Norfolk, VA and Princeton, NJ.

Rev. Marj Ragona was appointed to MCC Mission in Providence R I , and Rev. Steve LeFever is moving to Hartford. CT.

Rev. Howard Gaass, former N.E. District Coordinator announced his resignation from the position as he has accepted the pulpit in Cincinnatti, OH.

The Moderator, Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry attended the Conference and preached during the Saturday evening service, amid great rejoicing and a standing ovation of welcome from the clergy, lay delegates and friends.

The following evening he ordained Rev. Gil Lincoln to the UFMCC Ministry at the Manhattan Church, having first preached at Alpha & Omega, MCC Brooklyn.

DENVER, CO

The Board of Directors has set a target date of September 1, 1978, and a fund-raising amount of $150,000 to purchase their own building. Several area church buildings are being looked into for the best to suit their purposes. Their plans include fund-raising in areas that enables them to make money not out of their own pockets, but from the community. One of their longest running programs has been the re-cycling of empty beer and pop cans. This project has brought in over $1,000 in the past two years. It costs nothing to start and is 100% profit.

Coincidently, September 1, 1978, was MCC of the Rockies Fifth Birthday, having been established as a mission on that date in 1973 at the General Conference in Atlanta.

Administrative Assistant Pastor, Rev. Frank Murr, took to the hills on his motorcycle this month with local motorcycle club, The Rocky Mountaineers, for their last run of the year. The 150 mile Rally, The Aspen Run is scheduled annually to view the Aspen trees turning from green to golden yellow. Frank, to everyone's amazement, including his own, took the first place trophy on this run. Since he is still quite a novice on motorcycles, he claimed he had "help," he prayed constantly over the mountain roads that he wouldn't have an accident and that he would just get back safely. See – God does answer prayers and gives you more – if you but ask.

The Toby Foundation of Colorado, an organization in the gay community of Colorado, presented their 1977 award for *Best Organization Promoting Gay Unity* to MCC of the Rockies this month. Accepting the award, Rev. Charlie Arehart thanked the Toby Foundation and the members for their support of MCC and the unity of the gay community.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

The Rev. Sherry "Jamie" James has been named Associate Pastor of MCC St. Louis. Rev. James was licensed this year and previously served as an exhorter at MCC St. Lake City. Before becoming active in MCC, Jamie was a Mormon and received her Master of Education degree from Utah State University.

Rev. James and her spouse, Robbie, have moved to St. Louis where Jamie will be compensated at present in the form of expenses for conferences.

MCC St. Louis held a hay ride on September 24, planned a Founder's Day celebration for October 24, and held a Spiritual Renewal in September with Rev. Ron Anderson and the National Evangelistic Team.

The first Tuesday is committee meeting night at MCC St. Louis. The Social Committee, Building and Grounds, Christian Education, Publications, Christian Social Action, Prison Ministry, Funding, Music, Greeters, Public Relations, Outreach, Ushers, Phone Volunteers, Rap Group – all meeting on one night, at one time, in one place.

SEATTLE, WA

The Rev. Wally Lanchester, Pastor of MCC Seattle since June 1974 is featured in a full page story with photo in the latest (October) issue of Seattle Gay News. It's quite a tribute to a person the article calls "A remarkable man in a remarkable age."

In Seattle, Wally has served the gay community tirelessly. Besides serving as Pastor of MCC there, presently he is on the Board of Directors of the Gay Community Center, the Board of Trustees of the Dorian Group, is a member of the InterClub Council, and serves on the Greater Seattle Council of Churches' Task Force on Lesbians and Gay Men. An extremely high honor was bestowed upon Rev. Lanchester, the article says, when he was made a member of the Board of the Greater Seattle Council of Churches.

Wally is also the District Coordinator for the Northwest District of the Universal Fellowship in the USA, an area which covers northern California, Utah, Hawaii, Alaska, Oregon, and Washington.

BALTIMORE'S HOLY UNION

Representatives from various Gay Leather/Denim Clubs, Political, Social, Jewish, Feminist, Christian and Atheist groups joined with MCC Baltimore in celebrating the Holy Union of Rev. Stan Harris and Exhorter David Kromer on September 27.

The beautifully decorated Chapel of MCC Baltimore was filled to capacity as the couple made their promises to each other and exchanged rings.

Both Gospel and traditional music accompanied the hour-long service combining a Liturgical Eucharist with the Rite of Holy Union.

Exhorter Arnold Hutchings, (Worship Coordinator of MCC Greater Harrisburg) conducted the ceremony amid glittering banners, festoons of autumn leaves, and rust and gold bunting. (Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry was originally to have conducted the ceremony, but was unable to do so as he was recovering from his prolonged fast to combat the Briggs Initiative in California.)

The night before the Union, members of MCC Baltimore, led by Deacon Tom Migliaccio spent many hours decorating both Chapel and Fellowship Hall as a surprise for Stan and David. A cake was donated and a reception was held after the service during which a table prepared for gifts was found inadequate, the majority piled on the floor around it!

Rev. Harris, 33, is the first Australian to be Licensed and Ordained in the Universal Fellowship, and the first to Pastor an American Church.

Exhorter David Kromer, 39, formerly a Lutheran Augustinian Monk, became an Exhorter in Washington, DC in Oct. 1976, later transferring to Baltimore in March 1977.

They first met at General Conference in Washington in 1976; they were betrothed in Adelaide, South Australia in Jan. 1977 by Revs. Ellen Watson and Margaret Breckinridge (now Pastors of MCC Adelaide — Rev. Harris' original Church.)

Rev. Harris was called to MCC Baltimore and arrived in March this year. N.East District Co-ordinator Rev. Howard Gaass, who originally welcomed Rev. Harris to Baltimore, also attended the Ceremony.

The couple said they were "overwhelmed by the loving support shown to us by the Congregation. We have come to love them most dearly and feel ourselves to be very much a part of the Baltimore family . . . Isn't Jesus wonderful!"

VENTURA, CA

The Rev. Virgil Scott, pastor of MCC Ventura, was guest preacher for the Ventura Unitarian Church on September 18 and gave the lesson at the monthly meeting of the Ventura Ministerial Association. He has participated in two radio shows recently and has been named to the committee to provide chaplains for the Ventura County Hospital.

MCC Ventura, which had its own storefront facility for the last several years, is now happily sharing facilities with the Ventura Unitarian Church.

DES MOINES, IA

Cathy Elliott sends the following report from Des Moines.

Rev. Alice Jones accepted the call to serve as Pastor of MCC Des Moines in March of this year. She fought her way through the blizzards of Colorado and Wyoming. Waiting for her was a new parsonage prepared by the congregation. Accompanying her was Lani Remington, her life-partner, and Mrs. Irene Jones, her mother, as well as numerous family pets.

Since her arrival 16 new members have been accepted, bringing the total membership of the Church of the Holy Spirit to 75.

Invited by a local television station, the church prepared a half hour service for a telecast on "Church of the Air." Responses of the community demonstrated the the service's ability to reach all people with God's Word. The church was thrilled when arrangements were made for MCC Des Moines to provide an hour long service for telecast on "Church of the Air" on prime time on Christmas Day.

Rev. Jones and Marilyn Smith visited Rev. Joan Johnson at MCC of the Twin Cities in August and soon thereafter started the first Alcoholics Together group for gay alcoholics in Des Moines. Weekly meetings have been held since that time and local bars have cooperated in the promotion of this group.

The National Evangelistic Team visited Des Moines in August and uplifted the congregation by their preaching, Bible Study, and singing. Because of a cancellation, they returned again in September, with another blessing.

Rev. Elder Freda Smith also came in September for Spiritual Renewal and while there she officiated at the Holy Union of Rev. Jones and Lani Remington, and officially installed Rev. Jones as Pastor of the Church of the Holy Spirit, MCC Des Moines.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

The Northwest District will convene its fall District Conference at San Francisco MCC on November 11. There will be three days of Workshops, special presentations, business meetings, and worship services.

The Rev. Wally Lanchester is District Coordinator.

LOS ANGELES, CA

MCC Los Angeles celebrated its 9th anniversary beginning October 3 with four days of Spiritual Renewal, evening services and sermons by Rev. Troy Perry, Rev. James Sandmire, Rev. Jim Dykes, and Rev. Lee Carlton.

Friday and Saturday, October 7 and 8, were celebrated with performances of Carousel '77 (a musical review) and the grand liturgical celebration of the birthday was observed on Sunday, October 9, with Pastor Donald Pederson preaching, and Rev. Troy Perry and Mayor Thomas Bradley of Los Angeles in attendance.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

At the conclusion of its October 11-13, 1977 meeting in Dallas, TX, the Subcommittee on Standards of the Ministerial Credentials and Affairs Committee of the UFMCC issued the following statement with regard to its work on credentialling requirements for professional ministry in MCC:

"We recognize the existence of two basic avenues of preparation for professional ministry in the UFMCC — the practical/experiential, and the academic.

"In fulfilling the requirements for the vocation of ministry, persons involved in the preparatory process will be required to include elements of both of these basic avenues. Specific combinations will vary from individual to individual.

"All candidates will be required to pass examinations in the following four areas:

UFMCC Polity;
Bible;
Church History/Theology;
Practical Theology.

"Specific details will be developed through the process of further committee meetings, reception of input and final evaluation."

Members of the Sub-Committee will present the Sub-Committee's current thinking and pose questions for which answers are being sought — at the annual Ministers' Conferences early in 1978.

At the Western Conference, the Reverends Shawn Farrell and James Glyer will represent the Committee and at the Eastern Conference, The Reverends John Gill and Roy Birchard. There will be opportunties for input from those in attendance at the two Ministers' Conferences.

The Rev. Ron Burcham leaving Sydney, Australia. Ron is handcuffed to John Donohoe, as a sign of the affection of the Sydney congregation . . . they didn't want to let him "get away". Also in this photo (L-R) Victor Moymow, Rev. Ron Burcham, George Clarke, Barry Heller, Arnold Fisher, Bill Gregor, and Paul Sletcher.

SIDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Rev. Ron Burcham and his spouse, Bobby Brown, are back in the United States and MCC Sidney is looking for a new pastor to fill that pulpit following Rev. Burcham's resignation. An accompanying photo on this page shows Ron's farewell from a bevy of well wishers at Sydney International Airport.

Derek Wilkinson, a veteran of 25 years as a naval chaplain, heads the MCC Sidney bar ministry. Ian Davies is a board member and Director of Music.

During Rev. Burcham's pastorate, the church wiped out a $5000.00 debt and continued to build its social and religious activities. The CIC Gay Line operates in cooperation with MCC Sydney out of their office.

SAN DIEGO, CA

The "Joyful Noise Choir" of MCC San Diego, by special invitation of the Music Committee of General Conference VIII, performed the always popular cantata "Alleluia" at the Saturday evening ordination and graduation service at the Denver General Conference.

The "Joyful Noise Choir," directed by Frank Williams, lived up to its reputation as a spiritually inspiring and technically delightful singing group. They take their ministry of music seriously and the trip to Denver was undertaken at loving personal sacrifice on the part of many choir members who gave up personal vacations and paid their own way.

Their beautiful and meaningful message was a blessing for those lucky enough to be in Denver for the presentation of the cantata. Their "Joyful Noise" Album is available from Joyful Noise Choir, POB 33291, San Diego, CA 92103.

SAN JOSE, CA

The Rev. Stan Roberts describes his attendance at an organizational meeting of the Anita Bryant group in his city thus:

I would like to share an experience I had on September the 15th in Mountainview. It was with much prayerful seeking, that I attended the organization meeting of the California Save Our Children. I was not alone, in addition to my faithful body guard John, Deacon John Gamber, Deacon Charlie Debrowsky, Exhorter Kent Olson, Deacon Lee Balengo, Board member Evelyn Webster, Board member Frank O'Rielly, Rev. Jackie Harris, and a number of supportive people from other organizations. Our group made up about 1/3 of the people present. The major portion of the gathering was made up of very negative, anti-gay, homophobic fundamentalists. We went to observe the plans being made and to voice a clear opposition to this effort to deny gay people their rights. All I can say about that meeting can be put into one word, IGNORANCE.

We prayed, evidenced our opposition, and even made a few clear statements about the unsound theology. The anger and hate present was so harsh it literally permiated the air. If these people are allowed to become a voice in legal action we had better all pack our bags and move to the mountains. I was shocked and disgusted to hear people, in the name of Christ make such negative and cruel statements. The real killer was that these people would follow their ugly, vicious attacks by saying, "we love homosexuals." I can only pray that God will give us the strength and dedication to "STOP THIS HATE."

SAN JOSE, CA

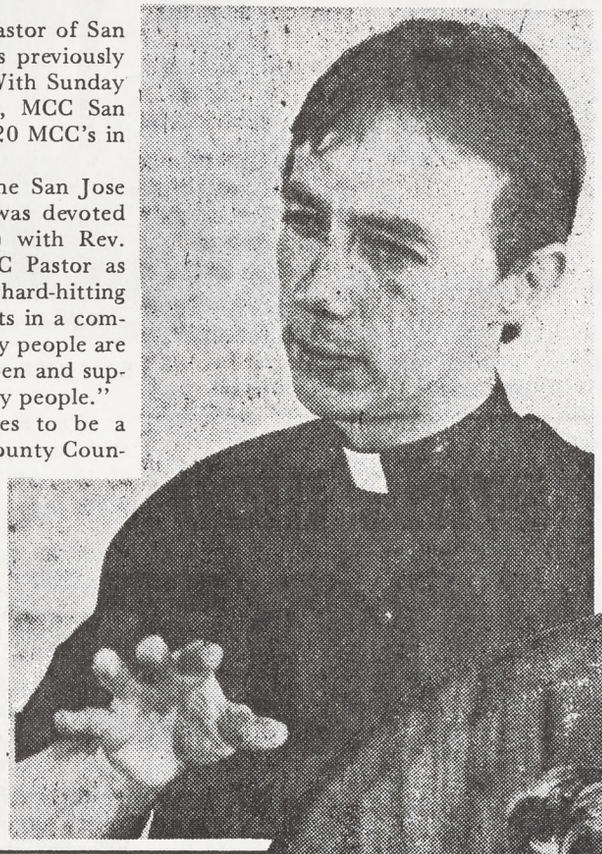
The Rev. Stan Roberts, pastor of MCC San Jose, has appointed the Rev. Jackie Harris as Assistant Pastor. (Rev. Harris was the subject of a feature article in the San Jose *Mercury* in 1976 which was reprinted in full in the March 1976 IN UNITY.) A follow-up feature on September 14, 1977 in the same major daily newspaper depicted Jackie and her spouse, Mary Lou.

Rev. Roberts has been pastor of San Jose since February. He was previously pastor of MCC Akron, OH. With Sunday attendance climbing to 100, MCC San Jose is now among the top 20 MCC's in Sunday offerings.

A full page feature in the San Jose *Mercury* on September 12 was devoted to an interview (and photo) with Rev. Roberts. It depicts the MCC Pastor as an articulate, "out" and hard-hitting champion of gay human rights in a community where, as he says, "gay people are pretty frightened of being open and supportive of human rights for gay people."

MCC San Jose continues to be a member of the Santa Clara County Council of Churches, a membership won last year after a fiery uproar in the council and in the community, during which several churches resigned from membership in the association.

Rev. Roberts is quoted as saying MCC "is a member of the Council, but only tolerated, although there are a few leaders of mainstream churches who are comfortable with me and my position on human sexuality."



The Rev. Stan Roberts, Pastor, San Jose, California.

(Right) Jackie Harris and Mary Lou Kerchner.

Photographs courtesy of the *San Jose Mercury* (Wednesday, September 14, 1977)

KNOXVILLE, TN

Knoxville MCC is excitedly looking forward to its first visit from MCC Founder, The Rev. Troy D. Perry, on November 14. They have prepared an eight page souvenir program for the event which will be distributed free to all who attend the service.

MCC Knoxville recently borrowed $1000 to purchase its own offset printing equipment and will make the facility available at cost to the entire Knoxville gay community. A series of benefits and fund raising events are being held to pay off the loan.

The church has taken on a voter registration project. It is possible to register to vote at the church and church members staff a voter registration table at various gay business places on weekends.

Recently members of the church and gay community conducted a mini-seminar on homosexuality for the Knoxville Police Department.

The Rev. F. Randall Hill is pastor of the active and growing Study Group.

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

The Reverend Jo Anne Monti and her lifemate, Annabelle, have recently moved from Toronto, Ontario, to take up residence in Montreal, Quebec, to begin the work of calling together a congregation of Metropolitan Community Church in that city.

Jo Anne was active in MCC-Toronto, as an exhorter of that church, in preparation for the ministry. She worked with the Community Services Centre, the telephone and drop-in project of the Toronto church, as a counsellor, and recently gave up her teaching job to devote full time to the ministry. She was an active member of the church choir, and often sang solos. The Reverend Monti is currently the National Director for Prison Ministry for Metropolitan Community Churches in Canada.

This new work is sponsored by a grant from MCC-Canada, as was the initial work in Vancouver, and becomes the fifth church of this denomination in Canada. Other church bodies are in Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver and Calgary.

NASHVILLE, TN

Outreach is one of the many exciting things happening in MCC Nashville.

A working group in the Nashville Church calls itself OUTREACH, and that group is currently involved in establishing a work in Chattanooga, TN. Six members of the OUTREACH team met with two persons from Chattanooga who were interested in having an MCC there.

Then OUTREACH members, with their chairperson, George Roberts, went to Chattanooga for a weekend and talked with their brothers and sisters in tthe two gay business establishments there. On Sunday Autust 14, Rev. Louise Leopold went to Chattanooga from Atlanta and there were 11 people present for Chattanooga's first MCC worship service. Since that time, the work has unofficially begun at Chattanooga and Rev. Leopold is serving as worship coordinator.

NEW YORK, NY

Personnel changes at MCC New York show an active and growing church. Anita Wolfe was appointed to the Board of Directors to replace Brandy Glick who resigned in order to devote his time and talent to serving as church business manager. John Milne was elected church treasurer. Jim Campbell was appointed for a one-year term as Exhorter. Rev. Karen Ziegler was licensed as a minister in the UFMCC at General Conference and Rev. Shelley Hamilton of MCC State College was appointed by Pastor Gilbert Lincoln as Assistant Pastor of MCC New York for a one-year ter. Hugh Bruce, MCC New York Exhorter, serves as Area Representative for the UFMCC Prison Ministry, and recently represented National Director, Rev. Robert Arthur, at a National Council of Churches seminar on prison reform.

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA

The Reverend Lloyd Greenway and his life mate, Mr. Norm Collins, have taken residence in Calgary, Alberta, to begin work on calling together a congregation of Metropolitan Community Church in that city.

Both men were active in the Toronto congregation, where Lloyd served as an exhorter preparing himself for the ministry. Norm served on the Board of Directors of the church until January of this year, when he resigned to begin working on the exhorter programme himself.

Each worked with the Community Services Centre, a telephone and drop-in project of MCC – Toronto. In addition they were responsible for preparation of the weekly Sunday evening church dinners.

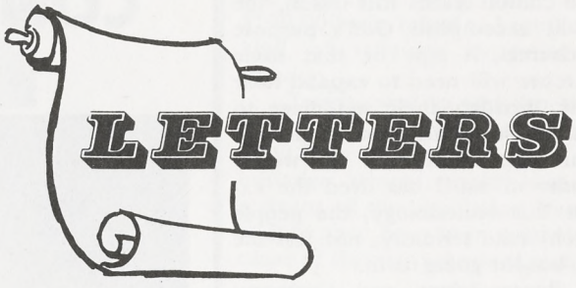
The work, sponsored by a grant from MCC-Canada, as was the initial work in Vancouver, is the fourth church in Canada.

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

District Coordinator, Rev. Jan Weymouth, has announced that the Australasian District Conference will be held December 30 to January 2 at a camp near Adelaide.

The site committee obtained the National Fitness Site in the Adelaide Hills, some 15 miles from the city for its mid-summer Conference.

It is set in beautiful country-side and has adequate recreational facilities. The $20 registration fee covers food and lodging and Conference expenses.



IN UNITY is witness to me that UFMCC is, indeed, a worldwide fellowship. It is, as well, a publication I have been proud to share with family and friends. It is informative, in excellent taste, and, above all, truly Christian.

I would thank you to send a complete catalogue of UFP publications.

In closing you all have my continued prayer.

George A. Boyson
Eugene, OR

Greetings and love in the name of our Lord Jesus from MCC Sydney. I write in conjunction with the use of the term "Jehovah" to designate God in the Winter 76-77 issue of "In Unity."

According to the Catholic theologian, John McKenzie (Professor of Old Testament, University of Notre Dame, Ind.) and Rabbi Scharmf, Ph.D., D.D. of Sydney, the word 'Jehovah' is a mistranslation of the sacred tetragrammaton 'YHWH' for the "I am who I am" of Ex. 3:14a. By combining the tetragrammaton with one of the other designated Hebraic words for God, 'Adonai' (Lord) the product came out as the non-word Jehovah that appeared in the Authorized Version.

No doubt this was done in an attempt by zealous translators to combine two acceptable synonyms for the divine Name in order to give it greater power and impact. However, the common translation of the sacred tetragrammaton as 'Yahweh' is etymlogically correct.

C.R. Connors
Sydney, Australia

If we are to be "etymologically correct" in our pronunciation of Biblical names then we had better refrain from calling the Savior "Jesus" and call him Yeshua (or Joshua) — which is the Hebrew translitteration — or perhaps we should use Jesu, which is the English translitteration of the Greek translitteration of the original Hebrew/Aramaic.

Just as "Jesus" is the name by which the Savior is known in all English-speaking nations, so, too, is "Jehovah" the name by which the Lord God is known in all English-speaking lands. In any event, while all scholars admit that "Yahweh" (or "Yahwah" or "Jahveh") is "more correct" than Jehovah the point is a moot one since the actual vowel points used in the Divine Name are still unknown and the actual pronunciation of the Name still unknowable. Those who prefer Yahweh are encouraged to use it, but IN UNITY will continue to use Jehovah.

It is not how we say the name that is important, but how we love and serve the One who is represented by the Name: "He (or she) is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart — spiritual, and not literal — Christ's praise is not from humanity but from God." Romans 2:29.

LGB

Editorial: Continued from page 33

more to change the world for Christian principles at a City Council meeting than at an MCC board of directors' meeting.

Troy Perry has demonstrated a dynamic concept of ecclesiology. The Christian needs a strong Christian community base, but the church is really the church when it is working in the world. Troy has preached to hundreds of thousands in churches, but the impact of his "lived ecclesiology" is, in my opinion, far more significant.

If the church learns this lesson, the church will accomplish God's purpose for the church. It may be that some MCC churches will need to expand their horizon or broaden their self-image to encompass the ecclesiology of the Gospel. Every Christian is sent into the world. The founder of MCC has lived the example. In this ecclesiology, the people (the church) take seriously, not just the gathering, but the going forth.

The Bryant-Briggs and Company threat has stirred us to action. Most MCC churches responded instantaneously and valiantly to the crusade for human rights launched by Rev. Perry. (Even though one pastor only casually mentioned it during the social hour after worship, most pastors gave all the people a chance to join in this exciting crusade — the church in action beyond the walls.)

Praise God if Anita Bryant and John Briggs can spur us to a more vigorous ecclesiology — a church of impact — a church which takes seriously its liberating mission, its call to show forth God's love to all people. And doesn't it seem only right to believe that human rights for gay school teachers (unknown to Bryant, Briggs and Ed Davis) is in the divine plan. (Davis recently pushed through the international police chiefs convention a resolution calling for the firing of all homosexual police officers, asserting, "I fire two or three a year.")

"For God so loved the gay school teachers and the gay police officers, that God sent God's only son that the gay school teachers and the gay police officers might have their human rights through him. . ."

And the church must carry on his work.

Amen.

And that's ecclesiology.

NATIONAL GAY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

(Pg. 41, Top) Charlotte Bunch, Editor of The Feminist Quarterly *Quest*, Washington, D.C.; Dianne Abbott and Bobby Bennett, of the Los Angeles New Age Coalition. (Center) Bruce Voeller and Jean O'Leary, Executive Co-Directors of the National Gay Task Force. (Bottom) The Rev. Troy D. Perry; Ginny Apuzzo, Co-Director of the Gay Rights National Lobby; The Hon. Elaine Noble, Boston, MA.

The Hon. Elaine Noble
Massachusetts State Representative

Ray Hartman, Los Angeles, Calif.
Co-Director, Gay Rights National Lobby

Involved gay people convened in Denver from all over the United States to hear America's foremost gay spokespersons share their expertise on "how to get the job done" at the federal, state and local levels.

The program got off to a running start with Rev. Troy Perry's stirring keynote address. The roster of attendees at America's first National Gay Leadership Conference read like a "Who's Who" of the gay movement in the United States, representing all areas of the country and all facets of the political and social action spectrum.

From the east, representing the National Gay Task Force and the Gay Rights National Lobby were Jean O'Leary, Dr. Bruce Voeller and Ginny Apuzzo, speaking on lobbying techniques at a national level.

From the California State Democratic Central Committee, San Diego Attorney Al Smithson gave a detailed guide on "how to organize your local community into an effective political base with strong politcal 'clout' at local and state levels." Los Angeles Attorney Ray Hartman presented a 'Plan to Guide Gay Rights Legislation through Congress."

A panel of experts on the issue of "Religion and the Civil Rights Struggle" was moderated by Father Tom Oddo of Dignity International. Speakers on the panel were Rev. Elder Freda Smith of the UFMCC; Dr. Ralph Blair of the Homosexual Counseling Center and Evangelicals Concerned, of New York City; and Father Ron Wesner, president of Integrity.

Moderating a panel of media experts, Joe Richards of *the Advocate* led an informed and experienced panel in the discussion of "how to use the media to get the issues across to the public." Jack Campbell of the Dade County Coalition led a panel consisting of Jim Foster of

Photos by Arthur Skipper

San Francisco and Ethan Geto of New York City in an audio-visual presentation on "Lessons Learned from Dade County."

The weekend conference closed with a spine-tingling and challenging "call to action" by State Representative Elaine Noble of Massachusetts. Inspired by the informed speakers and the dynamic challenges of the leaders, those in attendance were renewed and recharged in their determination to return to their communities and "get out the word."

The conference was co-sponsored by the four major national gay organizations concerned with gay rights – the Universal Fellowship of MCC; Dignity International; the Gay Rights National Lobby; and the National Gay Task Force..

The Fast: Continued from page 2

would be passed in the California state legislature. Now he was trying to collect enough signatures to get this unjust issue on the ballot and enact it into law by a state-wide referendum.

On Wednesday September 7, the "routine" was shattered by the realization that God wanted more. "It was the second day of my fast, while I was consecrating the elements for Holy Communion," Rev. Perry explained. "I didn't see a vision or anything, but it was as if there was a presence. God spoke to me and I knew I would have to fast until $100,000 was raised to begin to fight this kind of religious hypocrisy and oppression."

Troy vowed to fast "to the death," if necessary. "I will not eat again until $100,000 is raised to help stop this initiative which would keep a whole segment of the population from working at jobs they have been trained for – because of their sexual orientation."

During the 16 days, hundreds of people, MCC members, government officials, friends visited Rev. Perry as he spent day and night on the portico near the front entrance of the Los Angeles Federal Building. The UFMCC Board of Elders, while they were in town for their bi-monthly meeting, joined him for the daily Communion service at noontime and conferred with him there on church business.

Ed Edleman, Chairperson of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, came. Edelman's gay aide, David Glasscock, was there daily, offering friendship, support, counsel.

Peggy Stevenson, visited Troy three times. It was remembered that Peggy's husband, the late City Councilman, Robert Stevenson, had visited Troy during his ten day fast for fair employment practices towards gay people on the same spot in 1970.

Los Angeles City Comptroller, Ira Reiner, also went to see Troy three times as the prayer and fast vigil continued. Members and staff of the Los Angeles County Human Rights Commission, of which Rev. Perry is an active member, came. Abigail Van Buren, known as "Dear Abbie" in her syndicated advice column, called to express her concern.

A quickly formed list of Friends of Troy Perry allowed their names to be used in media ads. They included: Diane Abbit, New Age Coalition; Wally Albertson, Member of the Los Angeles Community College Board; Jack Campbell, Chairperson, Dade County Coalition for Human Rights; Ed Edleman; Jane Fonda; Tom Hayden; Dr. Evelyn Hooker; W. Dorr Legg, Founder of One, Inc.; Mel Levine, Member, California State As-

sembly; Burt Pines, Los Angeles City Attorney; Ira Reiner; Burt Schneider, Motion Picture Industry, Director; Peggy Stevenson; Abbigail Van Buren; Pat Underwood, Chairperson of Friends of Troy Perry; Joel Wachs, Council Member, City of Los Angeles; Zev Yaroslavsky, Council Member, City of Los Angeles.

The fast ended when the initial goal was reached on September 21. In mid afternoon a Kansas City business woman, known to many MCC members, called to pledge $20,000. She wished to remain anonymous. Her pledge brought the fund to $104,000.

Rev. Perry asked for a service of thanksgiving to be held at 8:00 p.m. that night. Nearly three hundred friends and supporters who had heard on the radio that the fast would end gathered at the Federal Building. In the brightness of television camera lights they sang "We Shall Overcome" and prayed as Troy and his lover, Ramon (Chip) Garcia, received Holy Communion. They broke into applause as Ramon fed Troy a bite of the cheese enchilada he had prepared — symbolically breaking the fast on Mexican cooking, his favorite food.

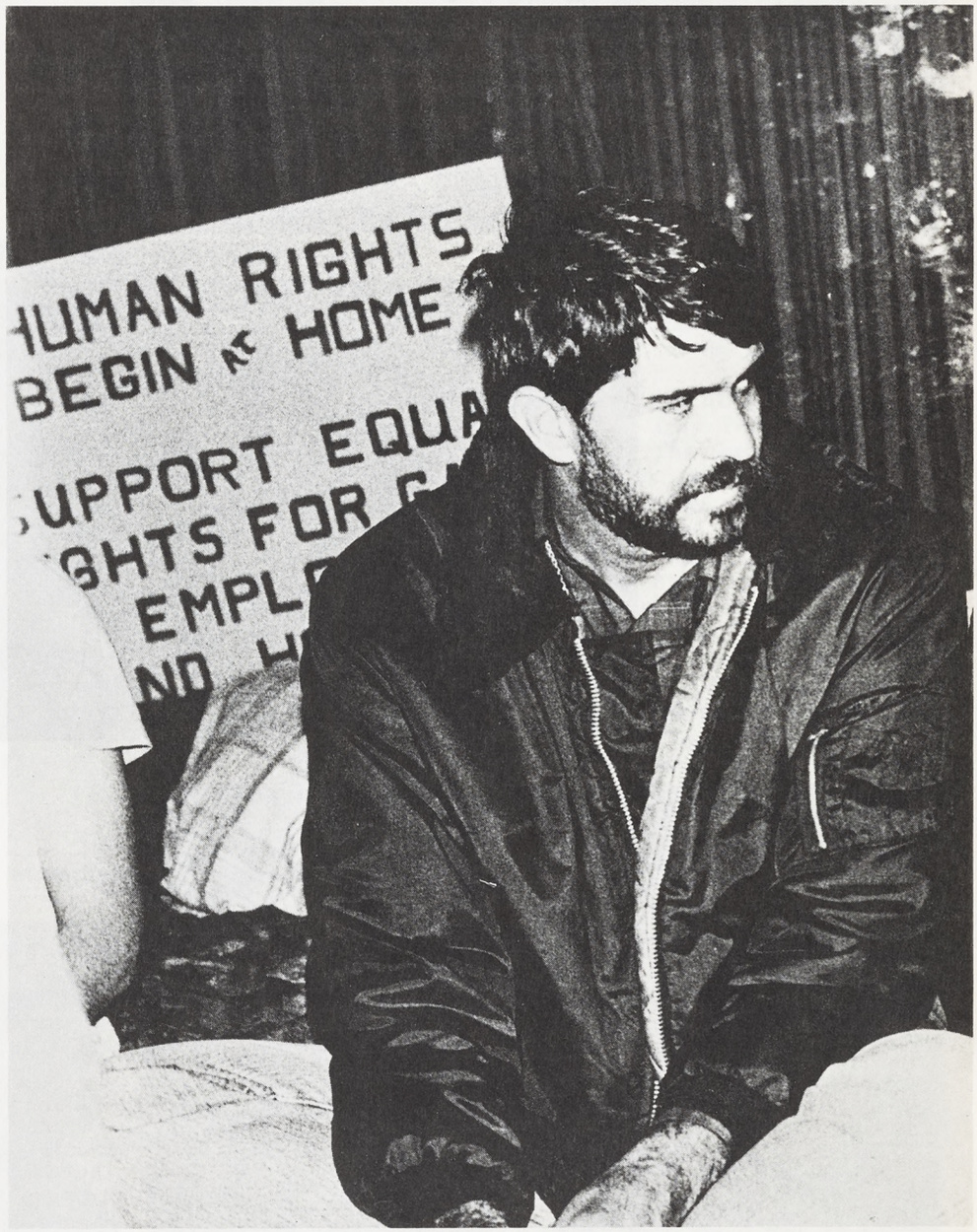
Rev. Perry, weakened of course, spoke briefly but resolutely, telling the well-wishers that the fight had only begun. As the television crews went back to their studios, the newspaper people jotted their last notes, and the church members received Holy Communion and sang a final hymn, Troy and Ramon headed home to sleep in their own bed for the first time in over two weeks. Ramon had spent every night with Troy at the Federal Building, along with a band of faithful men and women.

A few days later, Rev. Perry, his strength returning and his metabolism adjusting to food again, returned to his office to tend to Fellowship business. Letters continued to pour in from all parts of the United States. It was well known that the Briggs supporters (including those backing the state senator's announced campaign to win Governor Gerry Brown's job next year) have resources in the millions. "$100,000 is just seed money," declared Rev. Perry. "We will need over a million dollars to carry the struggle to the end."

In October, Rev. Perry and *Advocate* owner and publisher, David Goodstein, met with key gay spokespersons from northern and southern California to begin mapping a united campaign strategy. One gay activist remarked, "It will take more than billboards, mailers, newspaper, radio, and television ads to stop Briggs from rallying the homophobes of this state. 'Save Our Children, Protect Our Children from the Child Molesters, Restore Decency to America,' have a powerful pull. The slogans of hysteria always do. We should know from our fear and hatred of all Germans and Japs in World War II, from the McCarthy 'Red' baiting in the 50's, and from our decades of Nigger hating in America."

The Board of Elders of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches sent a letter to the 110 member church bodies asserting that "we believe we are called in this way to enthusiasm for preaching God's inclusive love for all people, so that the Christian church might be led back to the Gospel principles on which it was founded by Christ Himself."

(See the Editorial Comment and other related articles in this issue of IN UNITY.)

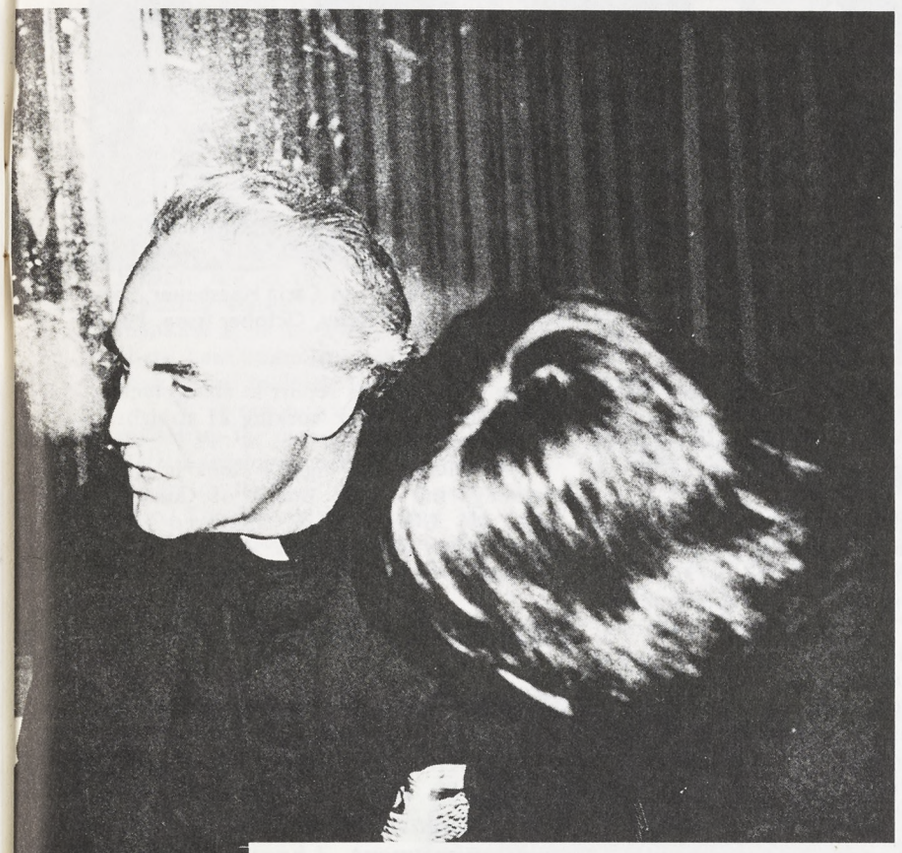


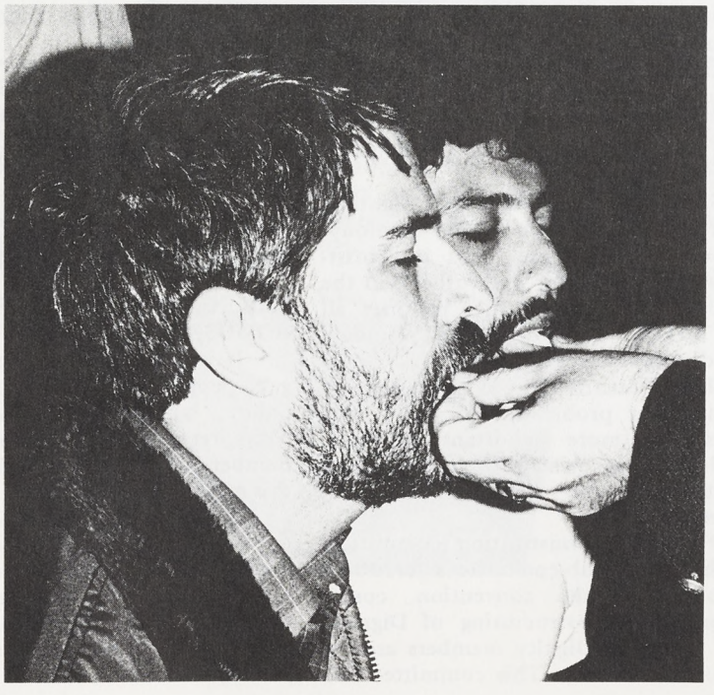
"Is not this what I require of you as a fast: to loose the fetters of injustice, to untie the knots of the yoke, to snap every yoke and set free those who have been crushed? Is it not sharing your food with the hungry, taking the homeless poor into your house, clothing the naked when you meet them, and never evading a duty to your kinsfolk? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn and soon you will grow healthy like a wound newly healed . . . You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail . . . You will be called Healer of the breach, Restorer of streets to dwell in." *Isaiah 58:6-8, 11, 12*

Photos by Glori Waco

OPENING SPACE

Every now and then someone does something so incredible that it allows us all to see how terrific human beings are. When what occurs also identifies clearly the morality of a controversial issue, I am always touched. Such an action was announced on Friday, Sept. 9, by Reverend Troy Perry. He intends to fast as peaceful witness to the hate campaign of California State Senator John Briggs and his friend Anita Bryant. His fast will last until $100,000 have been raised to help in the California statewide campaign against Senator Briggs initiative to deprive gay school-teachers of their livelihood. I am not a faster. All I could do was pledge the first $5,000 toward Troy's eating again.





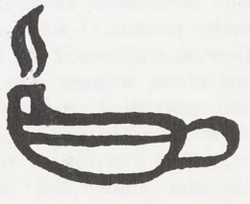
Troy and I have been friends a long time. Nevertheless, I am continually amazed by the purely spiritual responses he makes to such earthly concerns. As a non-religious person, I can only acknowledge the enormous power of an act such as this one. It very clearly identifies the real moral issues in our struggle. They concern our right to live free from discrimination. They do not concern phoney, hypocritical fears about our recruiting children.

As you probably expected of us, Troy and I have had long agonizing discussions about our community's need to achieve some cohesiveness around the struggle against our enemies, about the need for us in California to learn from the mistakes made in Florida, about the need for us to create a fabulous, professionally run campaign with the most experienced and talented campaign manager we can find and hire. After seven years of working together, we know from our experiences that we rarely disagree about methods. Then Troy will surprise me by adding to the efforts I understand one like his fast, an act that transforms the political into the spiritual. I can only admire him and assist him as best I can.

Troy and I have asked a few leaders in California to help organize a statewide and national effort to defeat the Briggs initiative. A larger meeting is being held in Sacramento to try to get substantial agreement and shared knowledge about how these elections work. The ADVOCATE will keep you informed about what is going on and how you can participate.

For now, I hope you will join with me in an effort to make Troy's fast a short one. We need him strong and healthy, for there is no one as capable as Troy in using the moral truths from the Christian tradition against the real blasphemers of Christ's teachings that God is Love. His counsel, his spirit and his energy are very important to us now. If you agree with me, send your first contribution toward this battle to California Fund for Human Dignity, P.O. Box 5570, L.A., CA 90055.

(Signed) D.B. Goodstein



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New national officers for Dignity are (Left to Right): Madeline Ritchie, Treasurer; Walter Kay, President; and Carla Kaesbauer, Secretary. Photo courtesy of *Metro Gay News*, October issue, 1977

DIGNITY

Delegates to the third biennial convention of Dignity, Inc. elected a trio of officers from the San Diego chapter as its national officers for the next two years. The convention was held in Chicago's Bismarck Hotel, September 2-5. A constitutional change, almost certain to be approved by an October 23 mail-in ballotting of members, calls for the officers of Dignity, Inc. to be members of the same local chapter.

Over 600 persons from the United States, Canada, England, New Zealand, and Australia were present as Walter Kay was elected President; Carla Kaesbauer, Secretary; and Madeline Ritchie, Treasurer. The new office of Dignity, Inc. is located at 3719 Sixth Avenue, Suite F, San Diego, CA 92103.

The Dignity, Inc. newsletter of September 1977 records that "the delegates voiced strong support of more social action . . . , more vocal response to obvious situations of oppression . . . (more) educational outreach to clergy and . . . hierarchy . . . and the public in general.

"Perhaps our greatest immediate success in Chicago was the realization of our need to better address ourselves to gay women. While the women in Dignity who were with us in Chicago were few, their presence was dramatically felt. Everyone affirmed the necessity of bringing more women into the organization and providing greater opportunity for their place in the decision-making process. The election of two women to the national slate well indicates the sincerity of the delegates' intentions.

"One of the major thrusts of the Dignity Convention was our need for regionalization. Overwhelmingly the delegates supported a change which would divide the country into regions and bring forth the elected representatives of those regions into a new board of directors."

An insight into the workings of the Convention is given in *The Voice* of Dignity/Richmond (September 1977):

Approximately 120 representatives ("consultors") of 60 chapters of Dignity, Inc., worked for almost 45 hours over a three and one half day period to re-create our organization into a strong, viable and more unified voice for gay and lesbian Catholics.

"We were faced with the situation that a 3,700-member national organization had no full-time, salaried staff, no effective checks on the actions of the national officers, no standard accounting system and no annual audit, and no way of utilizing the many and varied resources of the membership. We were faced with several distinct solutions to this situation. We anticipated bitter problems at this convention.

Instead of bitterness and fighting, the representatives worked in harmony, in positive politicking, and in Christ-like spirit of love for each other and the organization, Dignity, Inc. We met all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday, including many wee hours.

The "situation" was analysed by dividing our problems into eight categories. The more important structural problems were debated at length in the Constitution and the Finance committees.

From the Constitution committee, which met in sub-committees for 40-50 hours during the convention, comes the proposed re-structuring of Dignity, Inc., which all Dignity members are being asked to ratify. This committee as a whole finished its report at six o'clock in the morning after working 21 straight hours on Monday.

On Monday at eight o'clock in the morning, the entire Board of Consultors, BY CONSENSUS, approved the Constitution committee's report with very minor changes from the floor.

"I oppose all forms of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. As President, I can assure you that all policies of the Federal Government will reflect this commitment...I know there are homosexuals who teach and children don't suffer."

Jimmy Carter

(In a copyrighted leaflet distributed by Dialog for Human Rights, 1724 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009)

KKK CALLS FOR EXECUTION OF HOMOSEXUALS

It is not known if the execution of gay people is official Ku Klux Klan policy, but Boston's *Gay Community News* reports that by dialing a certain number a certain KKK office gives you this message:

"While many church people are duped by their brain-washed pink-panty preachers into believing that we should merely pray for the homosexuals, we find that we should endorse and support the law of God, which calls for the death penalty for homosexuals . . .

NOTES

"Not only have we seen the establishment of homosexual churches in our once unblemished land, but at least two major denominations have actually ordained homosexuals into the ministry...

"The Ku Klux Klan does not have to rely on the feelings or thoughts of man, nor do we need to experience a dialogue with some Jewish psychiatrist or rabbi who is mentally warped anyway.

"We rely upon the age-proven and reliable law of God. The law on homosexuality states: If a man also lie with mankind as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed abomination, and shall be put to death. (Lev 20:13)

"It is not our intention to put this matter up for discussion or debate, or to start a dialogue with a committee of queers as to their rights of sexual freedom. The law of God states the death penalty for homosexuals and when God's laws are again enforced, the death penalty is what it will be."

GAY RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE

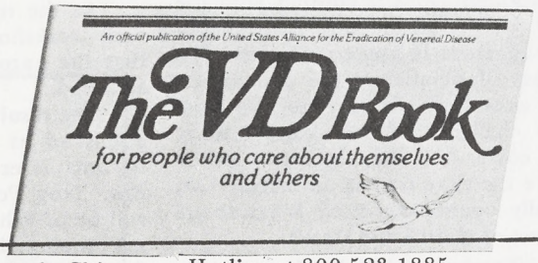
The Dignity Chapter of New York publishes an eye appealing and scholarly quarterly of religious articles of interest to the gay community. *Insight*: POB 5110, Grand Central Station, NYC 10017.

The November issue is devoted to reviews of books concerning gay and Christian issues.

NEW NEWS MAGAZINE

The Alternate, a new magazine for the gay community has published its first issue. Based in California (Los Angeles and San Francisco), *The Alternate* is published by a long time friend of IN UNITY, John Embry, who is also publisher of *Drummer*.

The magazine is published monthly. Subscription is $15 per year (add $5 for first class mail and $10 for overseas). The address is 1782 Pacific Ave., San Francisco, CA 94109.


An official publication of the United States Alliance for the Eradication of Venereal Disease
The VD Book
for people who care about themselves and others

The *VD Book* by Joseph Chiappa and Joseph Forish, has been published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. It is available in all Cokebury Bookstores for $1.95.

The *VD Book* is an official publication of the United States Alliance for the Eradication of Venereal Disease. They may be contacted toll free on the VD Hotline at 800-523-1885.

The book has been endorsed by many religious leaders and is recommended by IN UNITY. It is the single most definitive book on the subject available today – at a reasonable price, too.

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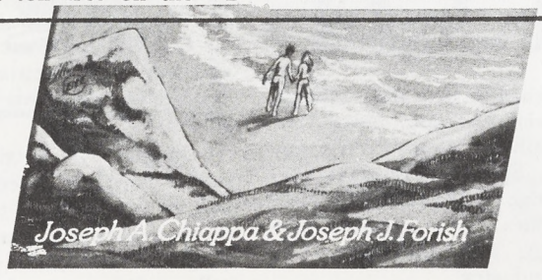

McNEIL SILENCED BY ROME

Father John McNeil, S.J., author of *The Church and the Homosexual*, has been ordered by Rome to refrain from public speaking or writing on the subject of homosexuality.

McNeil was scheduled to be a featured speaker at the Labor Day weekend convention of Dignity International. He did not go, obeying the order, relayed to him by his Jesuit superiors, from the Vatican office which "safeguards" the faith and morals of Catholics.

Just a few months ago he was refused church "permission" to visit Australia to promote his book, when the Archbishop of Melbourne informed McNeil's Jesuit superior that the author was "persona non grata" in that country.

The book, now in its third printing, is already a classic in the field of literature relating to being gay and Christian. Rome ordered that future editions of the book should not carry the Catholic seal of approval (*Imprimi Potest*).

The Rev. John McNeill, S.J.

THE CALIFORNIA POLL

A California poll which was released on August 12, shows that one half of those polled are barely tolerant of homosexuals. One person in twenty (or 5 per cent) takes the position that homosexuals should be "punished and kept away from normal people, a very large group (43 per cent) are only minimally tolerant of homosexuality. This group supports the position that homosexuals "should be tolerated but only if they don't publicly show their way of life."

On the other hand 31 per cent feel that homosexuals of both sexes should be accepted by society and protected against discrimination, and another 17 per cent believe homosexual lifestyles should be approved and allowed openly.

This leaves public opinion at a standoff, with 48 per cent of the public ranged on either side of the issue and only 4 per cent with no opinion.

SUPREME COURT "COPS OUT"

On Monday, October 3, 1977, the United States Supreme Court refused to review two cases dealing with the civil rights of homosexuals. In one of the cases, it let stand a ruling by the State of Washington's highest tribunal (James M. Gaylord vs. Tacoma School District No. 10) which has disturbing implications for the rights of all Gay Americans. Mr. Gaylord, a high school teacher in good standing, was fired because the school board felt that the mere self admission of homosexuality on his part constituted immorality whether or not immoral or illegal activities were involved.

By allowing this decision to stand, the Supreme Court held that it was legal for a professional worker to be dismissed solely because he admitted to being a homosexual. This permits a dangerous local precedent to remain intact: it means that a person can be discriminated against on the basis of her/his nature whether or not criminal or immoral behavior can be demonstrated. It condemns a woman/man on the basis of who she/he is.

The Gay Rights National Lobby urges all gay people to write to their members of Congress with the following requests:

"We urge you to take action to guarantee that this kind of blatant discrimination no longer be legally sanctioned. The Gaylord decision is dramatic proof that federal legislation to protect the rights of all citizens regardless of sexual or affectional preference is needed immediately. As representatives of the millions of Gay women and men in the U.S., we implore you to go on record in support of our rights; to co-sponsor H.R. 2998 (7775,8269) which would extend the protections of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to everyone regardless of sexual or affectional preference; to work to guarantee that no one need ever fear the loss of her/his job merely because of her/his affectional orientation.

"Thank you for your attention to this matter of great importance to many of your constituents. If we can be of any assistance to you, please call our Washington office."

DIGNITY/SACRAMENTO

The Dignity Chapter of Sacramento has consistently maintained a friendly relationship with the Metropolitan Community Church and reflects this in its valuable monthly newsletter, *The Heart*. Recently the chapter, through some hard work and publicity efforts on the part of its officers, raised over $1000 for Rev. Perry's California Fund for Human Dignity.

ANSWERING THE CALL

by Candy Halby

On Saturday, September 25, 1977, the Gay Caucus of the California Democratic Council (C.D.C.) held a state-wide conference in Sacramento. An invitation in the form of "A Call to Conference: The Briggs Initiative Upon Us!" went out to gay organizations and gay support groups all over the State.

According to Rev. James Sandmire, Chairperson, C.D.C. Gay Caucus, the purpose of this conference was to give local groups an opportunity to share what they are doing to fight the Briggs initiative and other oppressive legislation, and secondly, for these groups to learn to cooperate with one another, and to examine the possibilities of what kind of strategy for state-wide cooperation would be feasible.

The morning was devoted to a series of workshops on the following topics:

Legal and Technical: Is the initiative constitutional? Does it conflict with the 1st and 14th Amendments? Is the wording vague? Does it single out an indefinable class of people? Is the cost effectiveness as stated contrary to the law? Who to challenge? When? Where? What wlll it cost? Are the signatures valid? What are the time frames on Briggs? Can we legally counter-petition? What about separation of church and state?

Mobilization and Polls: Voter registration and mobilization. Precinct organization, and activity. Key precincts defined. Club building. Group consciousness, strengthening all of our institutions to prepare for the coming struggle. Who to do this? Is it to be done? What does it cost? What would be the timing? Would the major press do this for us? Which ones: Caddell, Hart, Schwartz, Opinion Research, Field. How would this be reported?

Public Education: The press, major, community, neighborhood, newsletters (with due emphasis upon the community's press). Speakers' Bureaus . . . sharing knowledge with our own community, our allies . . . non-gay community outreach. T.V. and radio. The Entertainment Industry.

Outreach: Coalition building in-community, with the non-gay community. Attention upon feminist concerns, labor, other people-oriented groups, the moral imperative . . . Party organizations, caucuses.

Research: Published documents, reports, newsletters, professional opinions, press clippings, present laws on the books which contradict Briggs, sociology-psychology-anthropology, other disciplines.

Fund Raising and Accountability: Surely much money will be needed. Techniques in raising. Registration with the State, full disclosure, bookkeeping, strict fierce accountability. Conduiting. The use of professionals.

Religious Concerns: Since this issue will be Church-oriented, what is our response? Will only fundamentalists be involved? Others? Tie in with other concerned groups.

Labor: How do we relate to labor groups? How do labor issues affect gay people? How do gay issues, and particularly the Briggs initiative affect labor?

Teachers: Since this issue puts the careers of teachers in jeopardy, a special workshop *for* teachers was called.

I attended the workshop on Religious Concerns where I saw members of Dignity, Integrity, the Jewish temples in Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as members of different MCC's sharing and uniting together to achieve a common goal: *to preserve the human rights of all.* It goes without saying that this was the goal of the entire conference, but it was realized only by the unique cooperation of the participants.

As the reports and resolutions from each workshop were read, it was evident that the purpose of this conference was achieved.

The results of this conference will be published as resource material available to any interested group or individual. Rev. Troy Perry feels that this material will be of value to the community. He is authorizing the first expenditure of the California Fund for Human Dignity to provide the necessary funds to publish the results of this conference.

Much work and many ideas came out of this conference, but the time was just too short. Therefore, a state-wide committee is being formed to coordinate and convene another conference to "tie-up the loose ends" from this gathering.

It was the hope of the officers of the C.D.C. Gay Caucus, and the others who were instrumental in organizing this conference that this would "start the ball rolling."

Judging from the enthusiasm of those who participated in this monumental first, not only is the ball rolling, but if this conference was any indication of things to come, the gay community is well on its way to defeating those who would advocate "liberty and justice for *some*."

To order these publications and obtain a catalog of other available materials write:

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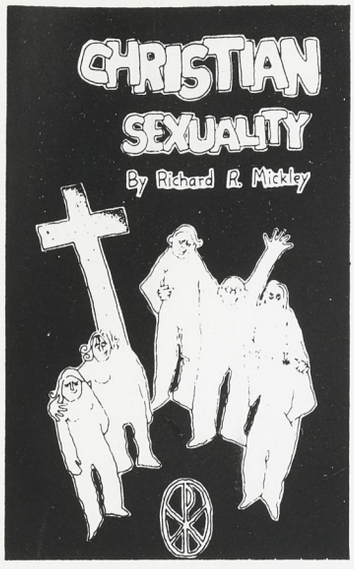

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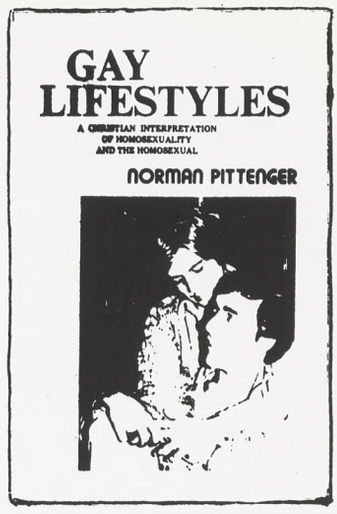

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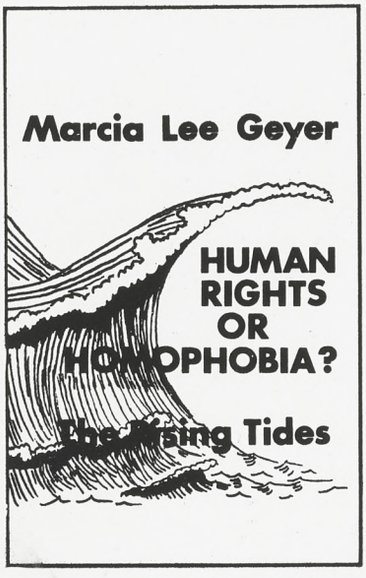

A careful investigation of the nature of Homophobia, an analysis of some of the writings of Anita Bryant and some of the reasons for the sickness of homophobia.

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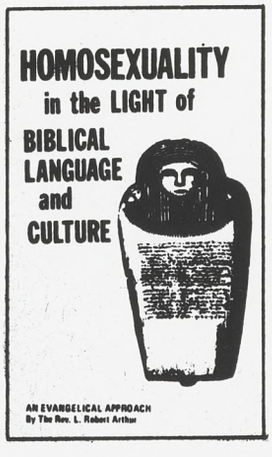
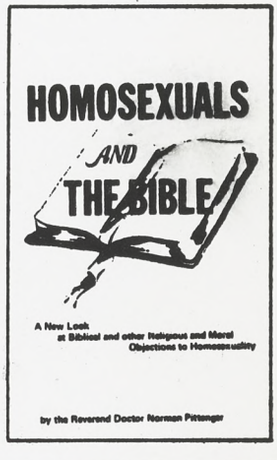
"Homosexuality in the Light of Biblical Language and Culture" a new pamphlet by L. Robert Arthur dealing with scriptures concerning homosexuality, $ .50 — *"Homosexuals and the Bible"* by Norman Pittenger. A scholarly approach to some of the religious and moral objections to homosexuality. $1.00





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